

DETAILED
HISTORY OF THE
STARSIEGE UNIVERSE

STARSIEGE™



Rick Barba
Blake Hutchins

Dynamix
A SIERRA COMPANY



Prima's Official Strategy Guide

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ing and may require repeated attempts
before the desired result is achieved.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your strategy guide for one of the most anticipated games of the year. Two years in the making, *Starsiege* has rumbled like a mammoth Knight's Gorgon into 1999's robot-sim arena and gunned down the competition.

The game lets you outfit your futuristic war vehicle with a dizzying variety of weapons, shields, armor, engines, reactors, and special components. Then, when your rig is ready to roll, you can leap into one of two diabolically scripted *Starsiege* single-player campaigns. Or you can go online to join wicked multiplayer melees.

In either case, it helps to know what you're doing. That's where we come in. This book culls the knowledge of those who know *Starsiege* and its universe better than anyone—the Dynamix design and quality assurance teams who created and tested this remarkable simulation.

PART 1: THE STARSIEGE UNIVERSE

Here's your ultimate tour of the *Starsiege* universe. Written by Blake Hutchins, lead Dynamix writer for *Starsiege*, this comprehensive guide explores the richly textured backdrop of the game. It includes an historical timeline, an in-depth look at the culture and technology of the 29th century, and, best of all, some finely crafted fiction illustrating "A Day in the Life" of several *Starsiege* characters.

PART 2: GENERAL & MULTIPLAYER STRATEGIES

This is a must-read for any prospective Herc pilot. Whether you plan to launch a single-player campaign or engage in some online multiplayer mayhem, this section offers many insightful tips and much inside information. The advice is particularly sagacious because it comes directly from the *Starsiege* design and testing teams at Dynamix.

PART 3: THE HUMAN CAMPAIGNS

This section is your detailed, blow-by-blow guide through the 18 missions that comprise the single-player Human Campaigns. Each mission walkthrough lists all enemy targets, suggests effective rig configurations, and then takes you step-by-step through the best available solution paths.

PART 4: THE CYBRID CAMPAIGNS

The book's final section steers you through the 17 advanced missions of the single-player Cybrid Campaigns. As in Part 3, you get detailed tactics and strategies for completing each mission.



Part One

THE STARSIEGE UNIVERSE

Starsiege, the game, is but the latest and greatest manifestation of Starsiege, the universe. The Dynamix creative team has woven a plush tapestry of history, culture, technology, and character to deepen your Starsiege experience.

Much of the rich detail of that universe has been conjured by Blake Hutchins, the Dynamix writer who graciously agreed to co-author this book. This first part of Starsiege: Prima's Official Strategy Guide offers his extensive and highly entertaining overview of the Starsiege universe. Hutchins also includes some illustrative pieces of fiction, each featuring "A Day in the Life" for a particular type of Starsiege character.

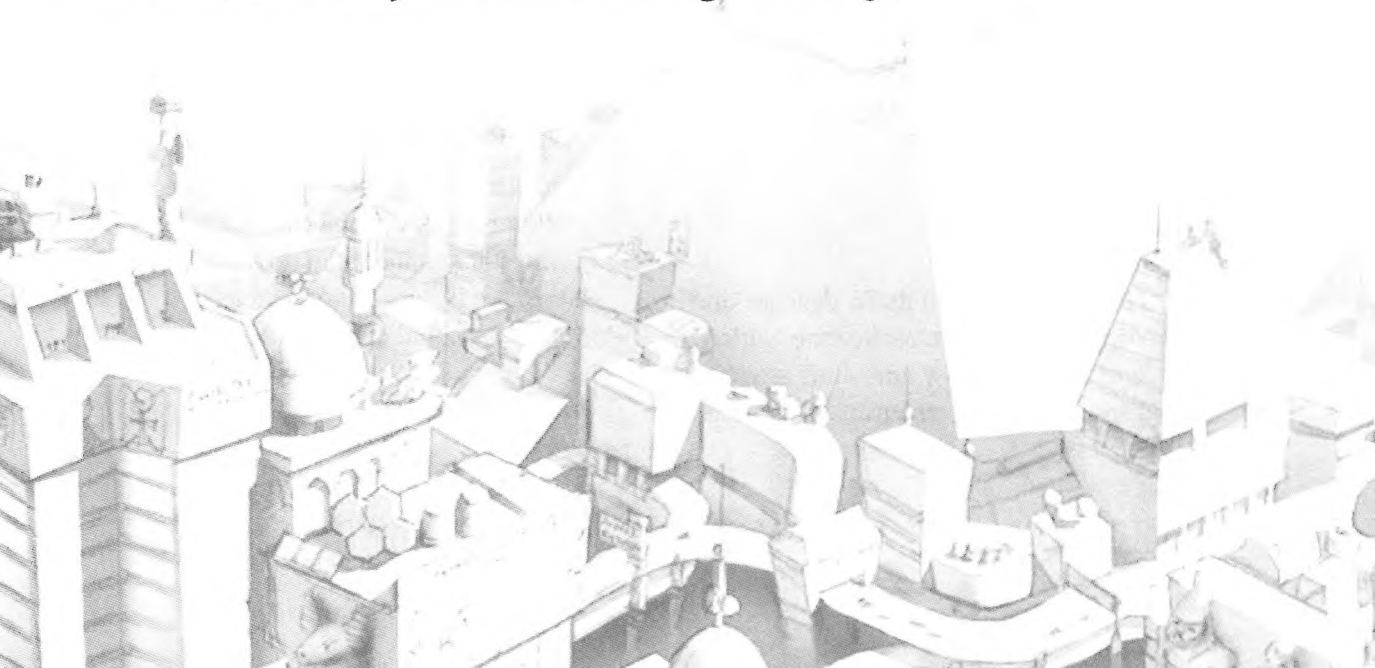
We open Part 1: The Starsiege Universe with a timeline of the key historical incidents that culminate in the events of the game. Enjoy.



A STARSIEGE TIMELINE

Chapter 1

Here's a chronology of notable events in the history of the Starsiege universe. For a more detailed, in-depth look at the historical events that forged the Starsiege universe, see Chapter 2: A Starsiege History.





CIRCA 2000

The Devastation occurs.

2015

Led by Jake Hunter, humanity begins to emerge from the Devastation.

2025

Jake Hunter disappears in the so-called "Rapture Offensive." Religious movements spring up, calling Hunter "the new messiah."

2035

The *Age of Decay* begins, originating with the reestablishment of China, the first meta-nation. Humanity clusters in huge urban areas called *metrozones*. People are desperate and easily victimized by scam artists, thieves, quack cults, and petty dictators. Lotteries, drugs, and pleasure houses gain widespread popularity. Violence is common. Human life is as valuable as dirt.

2075

Humanity feeds on itself. Violence and crime are rampant. Metrozone warlords impose martial law and battle scavenger gangs for scarce resources. Warfare is continuous.

2100

Six meta-nations have emerged. (For more on these, see The Great Human Empire in Chapter 3: Politics.) War games train children for a combat role in society. The average number of children in a family is nine. The life expectancy for males is 39, for females 35. Orphan children and homeless people are common sights.

2110

Military service has become the only way to receive an education. Military academies, therefore, grow in importance.

2150

Most military organizations are run like corporations. Human assets grow in importance as well-trained troops become necessary to acquire resources. Enlistment now involves lifelong service contracts, promotion incentives, and special training.

2200

The distinction between corporation and nation is extremely blurred. Military concerns still dominate the markets, but market share is increasing in areas of science, technology, and entertainment.

2225

Meta-nations put in place domestic pacification strategies to reduce the everyday violence that disrupts business. These



long-term policies are aimed at increasing the personal wealth of average citizens and keeping them happy.

2275

Beginning of the *Age of Hope*. The domestic pacification strategies of the “milicorps” create a new stability. Average life expectancy has risen to 83 years. People begin to place greater value on human life.

2350

Civilization has revived. Continual warfare between the meta-nations has become an institution tied to the world economy. Personal wealth is high, and computers have permeated society. The high value placed on human life leads milicorps to invest in the automation of weapons platforms to reduce battlefield deaths.

2382

Stormtanks displace powered armor infantry as premier battlefield armor.

2398

Prototype “walker-tank” is battle-tested successfully.

2400

Average life expectancy reaches 90.

2417

HERCULANs become the primary ground combat vehicle on battlefields.

2450

Earth’s population reaches 10 billion. Art, literature, and science flourish. Neural-net computers that mimic human thought processes become widely used.

2455

First permanent lunar base established.

2456

First of the manned Mars missions.

2465

Sentinel Cybertronix is bought by NAP—the North American Prefecture, one of the Earth’s six meta-nations. It quickly becomes the world leader in neural-net programming, cryo-technology, and microsurgery. Human life expectancy leaps to an average of 120 years, due to the strength of medical breakthroughs.

2466

NorthAm lunar colonies established. Construction of Imbrium Station.



2470

Asteroid mining becomes lucrative for the corporations.

2471

Sentinel Cybertronix unveils Prometheus, an artificial intelligence with unprecedented capabilities.

2480

NAP puts Prometheus in charge of Cybrid programming for world markets.

2482

Mars colonies are established by two meta-nations, NAP and Pacific Rim. Terraforming begins.

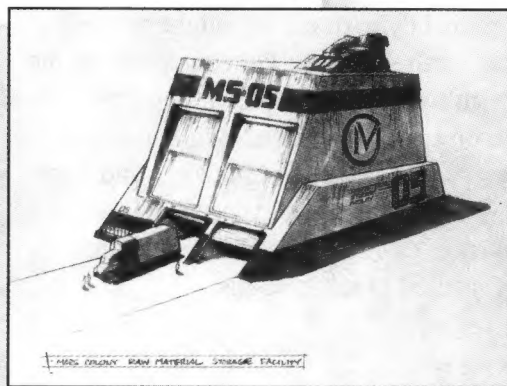


Fig. 1-1. Early Martian mining colonies provided tons of raw materials for corporate-run “meta-nations.”

2504

The comet, “Noah” is dropped onto Mars as part of the terraforming plan.

2506

Venus colonies are established by European Alliance, NAP, and Pacific Rim.

2600

Most Hercs are now controlled by Cybrid brains. Few human pilots remain on active duty.

2602

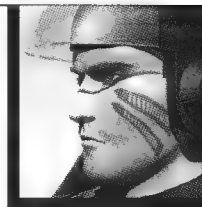
The Fire. Cybrids turn on humanity and destroy the *Age of Hope*.

2605

A desperate Earth withdraws support for the fledgling colonies on Luna, Mars, Venus, and outlying mining stations. Colonists suffer massive casualties, but some manage to keep on fighting, using hit-and-run guerrilla tactics.

2608

Battle of New San Diego. “Terran Defense Force” rallies humanity against the Cybrids.



2622

Terran Defense Force defeats Prometheus on Earth, ending the first phase of Earthsiege. Prometheus escapes.

2624

The second phase of Earthsiege begins as the Cybrids invade Earth again with reinforcements drawn from the colonial fronts.

2625

Solomon Petresun, the “Voice of Humanity,” emerges triumphantly from his underground refuge. He brings news that coded Cybrid transmissions have been broken, revealing the location of Prometheus’s base on the moon.

2627

End of second phase of Earthsiege. The daring destruction of Prometheus’s moon base fails to uncover signs of the dark intellect itself. Prometheus is again presumed to have escaped with its core matrix intact. Cybrid drive emissions indicate a trajectory toward the outer planets. Dazed but jubilant, humans begin to rebuild. Anti-technology reaction begins to set in.

2640

Age of Isolation. Anti-tech sentiments gain enough popularity to retard scientific progress. Little contact and no help are provided to off-world colonies.

2650

Cybrid schism. Cybrids split into the Promethean and Metagen factions. Prometheans follow the Promethean philosophy that machine is superior to biology. Metagens have begun to incorporate a respect for the human ability to survive. Prometheans, still in the vast majority, persecute and reprogram known Metagens.

2652

Inception of *The Great Human Empire*. Solomon Petresun is crowned Emperor—“Petresun I.” In the years to come, the Empire reestablishes contact with the colonies.

2688

Emperor Petresun authorizes the BioDerm program to convert capital criminals to cyborg laborers.

2700

Humanity embraces development of high technology again as the scars of the Earthsiege heal. Prometheus continues to build its forces.

2717

Imperial probes detect massive Cybrid activity beyond Neptune.

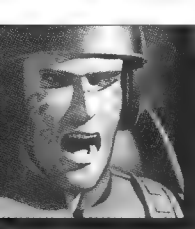


Fig. 1-2. The crowning of Emperor Petresun establishes The Great Human Empire, centralizing efforts to reestablish an advanced civilization after The Fire.

2720

Long Patrols begin, using the Titan Orbital Station as a base.

2770

Fortress Earth Proclamation issued: All economic efforts are to be geared toward fortifying Terra Mater's defenses. All colonial activity is directed toward providing resources for Earth.

2800

Humanity is united only against the Cybrids. Colonies have formed resistance movements spawned by hatred of the fortification efforts that plunder the colonies of needed resources while giving little in return. The Empire and the Cybrids have massed huge armadas, but no human knows the extent of the Cybrid buildup.

2814

"Trojan Horse" incident. Cybrid influence discovered on Earth.

2819

Turkhazak Debacle. A strike force of elite Imperial Knights is unexpectedly crushed in a Central Asian uprising, handing the Knights their first real defeat.

2820

The disgraced leader of the Turkhazakistan strike force, Harabec Weathers, resigns from the Knights and leaves Earth.

2826

Martian rebels discover advanced alien technology. While the purpose of the cache is unknown, the rebels adapt what they can to their own vehicles and weapons. This technology shifts the balance of power such that the rebels become a legitimate challenge to the Empire.



2827

Rebels use pirates and black market contacts to send Martian cache technology to Venus.

2828

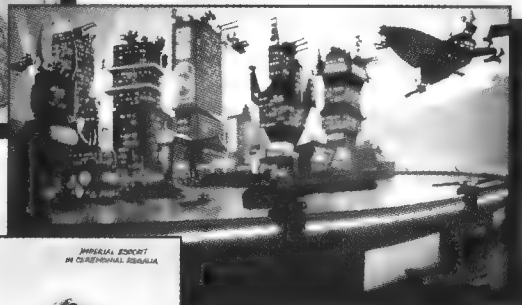
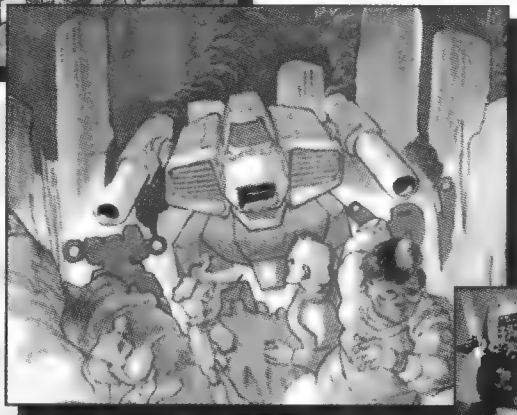
Martian rebels emerge in force and challenge the Imperial Police, using cache technology to unnerving effect. Imperial casualties are high.



Fig. 1-3. An Imperial strike force launches a surprise attack on a Martian rebel mining colony.

2829

Harabec Weathers emerges as general of the Martian rebels. Hostilities break out on Venus. Emperor Petresun unleashes the bulk of the Imperial Fleet to quash the rebellion. The Cybrids see their opportunity and launch a massive invasion armada, bypassing Titan. Starsiege begins.



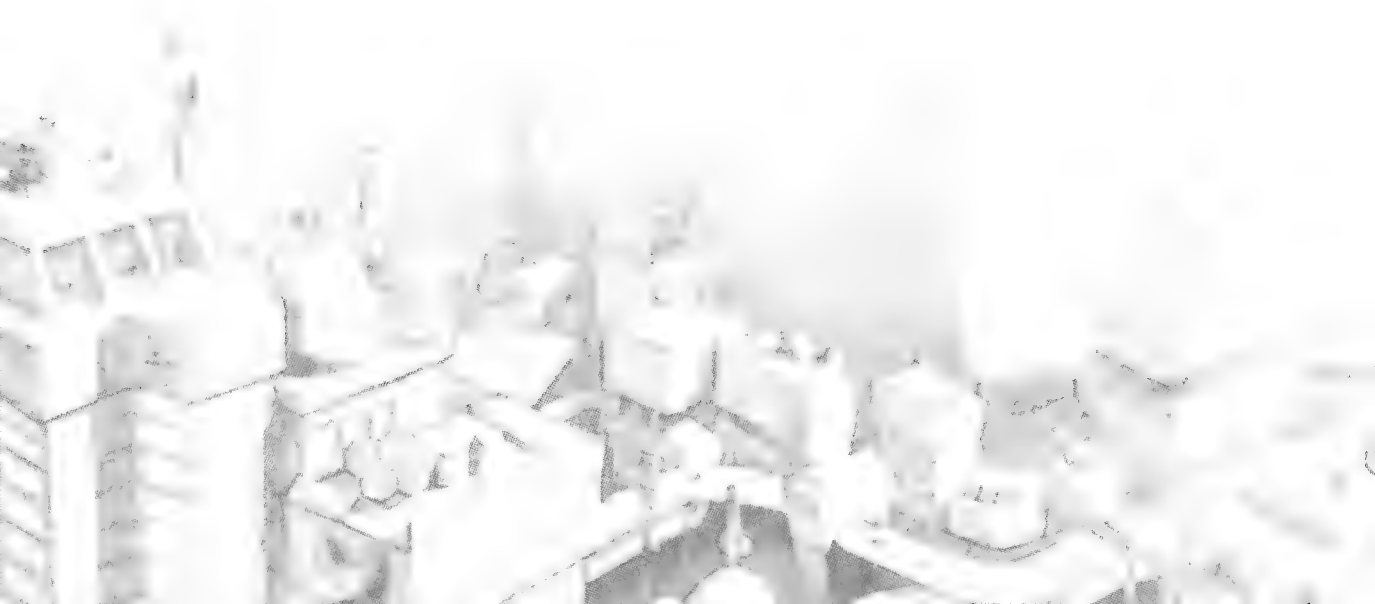


A STARSIEGE HISTORY

Chapter 2

It was the beginning. But first, it was the end.

Excerpt from "The Book of Hunter," Devastations 1, New Tellurian Bible (800th ed., 2725).





1996-2015: THE DEVASTATION AND THE RISE OF JAKE HUNTER

Even as it happened, people disagreed as to what was happening. Some said it was the Second Coming. Others believed the flames of the Final War had been sparked at last. Still others claimed it was an alien invasion or a nuclear experiment gone horribly wrong. Regardless of what really happened, the course of human history changed forever at the beginning of the third millennium. Billions died in the first days, more than two-thirds of the world's population. Earth's governments vanished virtually overnight.

The devastation was beyond description. Scattered bands of refugees cowered in shock under ash-darkened skies, finding shelter in labyrinthine tunnels beneath the ruins of once-proud cities. Humanity had fallen, and the heirs of the 21st century fought one another like beasts over the scraps of civilization.

Historical records were nonexistent until after the year 2015. Most journals describing the time refer to a hellish struggle in some kind of gladiatorial game held for unseen alien tyrants. Thousands of survivors made the same claim, with extensively detailed descriptions. However, archaeologists and historians have found no hard evidence to support this claim. There are no alien remains, no arcane relics, and no wrecked spaceships in the 29th century. Regardless of the claims, however, 2015 marked the time when mankind began to crawl out of its rat holes and sewers to live again under the open sky.

The Recovery: Early Years

The leader who almost single-handedly dragged these ragged survivors out of the darkness is known to history as Jake Hunter. Hunter formed a government in the blasted remains of the United States and led people in the first steps toward rebuilding the world. While evidence does establish the existence of Hunter himself, the myth that surrounds him is a matter of faith and belief.

Reliable descriptions of Jake Hunter's early life are few and heavily wrapped in the trappings of fable. Some say he was born in the alien arenas and took his first prey while still an infant. Others say he was simply a hunter and warrior of exceptional skill and talent. Hunter himself claimed he had fought in bloodsport games for unknown extraterrestrial "Masters." He went further, however, and asserted he had allied with an alien beast-man called Garathe Den. Together, he said they escaped from the "Masters" and solved the true challenge. Hunter said the aliens then departed, promising to return someday.

Hunter possessed an undeniably powerful charisma, the proverbial "look of eagles," and people flocked to his banner. For 10 years, humanity rallied under his leadership and struggled to reestablish laws, schools, farms, and hospitals. The challenges were enormous. Disease and violence ran rampant, and many unfortunate souls sought solace in home-brewed, extremely potent drugs. Then Jake Hunter vanished from the records in 2025.



The Rapture Offensive: Fact or Myth?

Like the rest of his life, Hunter's disappearance remains the stuff of legend, indeed even of theology. His followers claim he took a platoon of troops in a spaceship to destroy an alien war station orbiting the moon. They say that this mission, dubbed "The Rapture Offensive," was a success, but that Jake Hunter did not return.

Some scholars suggest the very term, Rapture Offensive indicates the entire life of Jake Hunter was merely a myth, a messiah delusion, collective hysteria among people who had suffered through the apocalypse. And yet, Jake Hunter has ascended to a divine mantle, deity or saint, depending on the faith. He has become a fixture in nearly every major religion of Earth. Whatever the truth, *The Hunter* brought light to the people of Earth in a time of great despair and darkness, and his memory lives forever in the hearts of humanity.

2035-2275: THE AGE OF DECAY

Ch'cool, ribber, I trade you two cases vac-sealed Oldfood and a half truckload of tomatoes for her, but you slide me first bid on her brother next season—if he's healthy.

Agri-labor procurer to a streetslaver
at LA Night Auction, 2036.

The Devastation left Earth a shadow of its former self. Entire nations were gone. Cities had been wiped off the map. Roads and factories lay in useless rubble. The experience had decimated Humankind. In 2020, most living humans had been born after the Devastation, and few remembered the time of innocence. The world's population had fallen to a fraction of its pre-Devastation numbers. For nearly 250 years, in an era known as *The Age of Decay*, human society languished in self-pity and shock. Opportunistic villains exploited this desolation and fed off the sorrow and desperation of millions.

Meta-nations and Metrozones

By 2100, six meta-nations had tenuously emerged from the chaos. The European Alliance (EA) united the survivors of the former European countries. The North American Prefecture (NAP) replaced the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Japan combined with Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, Micronesia, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Australia to form the Pacific Rim Community. China swallowed most of the remaining parts of Asia. South America came under the dominion of the Inca-Brazil Axis, and the surviving African nations formed United Africa.

Enormous urban areas called *metro-zones* soon harbored 85 percent of the world's population in what amounted to gigantic, pestilence-ridden refugee camps. The Devastation had crippled the world's agriculture, and food was very scarce.



Metrozone warlords imposed martial law in an attempt to gain control. At the same time, medical care was even scarcer than food, and disease raged unchecked through most areas. Starvation and sickness were the norm. Anyone who disobeyed the warlords' rules was summarily shot or "mercifully" exiled to the wilderness, never to return. Many refugees ventured outside metrozone walls to take up farming, often under the eyes of watchful guards.

Mass Addiction: The Drug Culture

The vast majority of survivors turned to drugs to numb their misery. Many were still addicted to substances from the Devastation era. These addictions proved more virulent than any plague, for the drugs spawned aggressive and crazed behavior among the refugees. Watered down versions of devil potions such as *Wreck*, *Twisthead*, and *Easy-6* did little to stall the downward spiral. The trauma of the Devastation had scarred whole populations for life. Death was the only real cure, and countless bloody riots broke out in the camps as brooding addicts exploded in sudden, mindless violence.

Rebirth of Agriculture

Some few independent souls rejected the squalid misery of the refugee camps and attempted to reclaim the territories outside the metrozones. Ultimately, these hearty farmers would form the backbone of the new society. The few who survived those first difficult years began harvesting excess

grains and produce. To do so, they fortified the earth with nutrients and clean water, using scavenged machinery and materials.

As farming became more efficient, the fledgling farm communities began to trade their surplus food and potable water to the filth-choked metrozones, which could not produce enough of either commodity themselves. In return, farmers acquired tools and other manufactured items they could not make. The new tools in turn allowed the production of more food. Gradually, painfully, commerce once again began to flow. At first, it was confined to small markets, then to caravans between metrozones, and finally between the emerging meta-nations.

Many regions initially produced only marginal yields. When one area began to produce enough surplus to feed its neighbors, less fortunate metrozones would send raiding parties. These raids ignited hundreds of minor wars and formed the foundation of the institutionalized war economy of the *Age of Hope*.

Early Metrozone Culture: Gangs, Graft, and the Black Market

Conditions in the metrozones were desperate. People lived in a crush of tents or tiny, bunker-like apartments. Sanitation was nearly nonexistent. Scavenger industries sprang up everywhere, and gangs of desperate, hungry refugees picked over the bones of the past, searching for tools and food. These neo-tribal organizations fought

savagely over turf until the metrozone warlords had to intervene.

A thriving underground market grew in scavenged goods, slaves, and food. Scam artists ran the streets. Many inhabitants turned to drugs, bizarre fringe cults, or gambling. Hedonistic pleasure palaces fed dark appetites. The value of life was pitifully low. Even children represented just another commodity. Boys who survived past the age of fifteen were often sold into militia service. There, they served as cannon fodder for the bloody squabbles over food, water, petroleum, and other resources. Girls were raised to be slaves and the equivalent of brood mares.

Graft and corruption riddled local and regional government organizations, as well. Many a government official rose to power through controlling the pleasure palaces, the drugs, or the slave auction blocks. They had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

Rise of the Military-Industrial State

Ironically, the need for better-trained soldiers would be the genesis of society's redemption. As raids between metrozones escalated to full-fledged wars, entrepreneurial traders recognized the potential of the market for war supplies. Successful metrozone warlords developed ever-closer relationships with their corporate suppliers, until the corporations actually merged with their military customers.

As these vertically-integrated military corporations, known as *milicorps*, cemented their influence, they made certain the military would remain necessary. Artificially prolonged conflicts strengthened their political hold, a hold paid for by the blood of soldiers serving in the armies. Metrozone governments and the milicorps became indistinguishable, with an executive board of directors controlling the armed forces.

This new military-corporate culture manifested itself in *wargames*, violent, gladiatorial contests that became fabulously popular. Their purpose was to train the next generation of soldiers.

A New Culture

As generations passed, armies controlled larger and larger areas outside the metrozones. Production of food, water, and resources increased. The recovery of industry made warfare complex enough to require better-trained troops. The milicorps began adopting long-term strategies to ensure their domination for centuries to come. They needed smarter warriors and better technology, so they established academies and research facilities that provided enormous incentives to cadets in return for lifelong service. Within a generation, the best way to escape the slums and tent cities would be a military education. Conscripted slave-militias gave way to professional soldiers.





By the end of the Age of Decay, the milicorps ruled entire collections of nation-states—meta-nations—and dominated every aspect of life. Society was on the path to recovery; education, technology, industry, and science had reemerged. The milicorps adopted domestic pacification as a long-term policy: *Keep the people happy and they will obey*. The value given to human life rose at last, and the individual once again began to matter. Humanity had slowly moved from decay and fear to the beginnings of hope. However, the continual wars between the meta-nations continued.

2275-2602: THE AGE OF HOPE

In truth, I say that triumph coils in our very genes! Our ancestors faced the Apocalypse—and survived! Now we stand on the brink of becoming Homo Stellans. "Star-crowned Man." It's our destiny, in our genes. Nothing will change that now. Nothing!

Minister Giustina Liebermann addressing the EA Parliament, 2600.

The Age of Hope, which lasted for more than 300 years, was a time for humanity to take stock. The Devastation left humans on the brink of extinction. Against steep odds humanity found a way to stave off oblivion. Very little remained of the pre-Devastation era. War, which had continued for

over three centuries, had become institutionalized, accepted as a necessary component to global prosperity. The distinction between government and corporation had become almost nonexistent. Military service was the premier profession, offering the greatest prestige and representing the loftiest ideals.

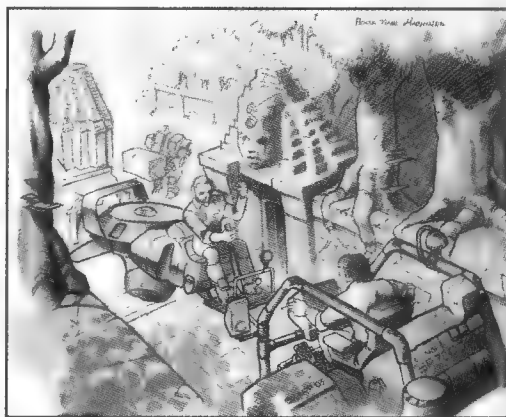


Fig. 2-1. Technology fueled a booming peacetime economy, bringing civilization into an Age of Hope.

By 2275, subsidiaries of huge nation-state corporations governed all metrozone city-states. Several of these corporations had merged into multi-national conglomerates, allying their armies to strengthen their hold on world markets. These *meta-nations* dealt in resources: food, water, land, technology, labor. They all recognized the importance of keeping their peoples' support, so they incorporated a shareholder concept to encourage civic participation. Citizens had a vote for each share, and the shares gave every citizen a direct economic stake in meta-national policy.

At the dawn of the Age of Hope, there were six meta-nations: the North American Prefecture, the European Alliance, Greater China, the Pacific Rim, the Inca-Brazil Axis, and United Africa.

North American Prefecture (NAP)

The most technologically advanced meta-nation was the North American Prefecture (NorthAm, or NAP). Extremely wealthy in natural resources, NAP emerged from the milicorp merger of 50 metrozone city-states. Six of these city-states had particular significance: Los Angeles-San Francisco Axis (LASFA), New York, New Chicago, Mexico City, Vancouver, and a military fortress-city rebuilt over the Chesapeake-Potomac ruins, called Central Control, or less formally, “Chesspot.”

NAP used its technological dominion in aggressive trade wars and targeted strikes that kept the other meta-nations at bay. A long-running war with the Inca-Brazil Axis over the possession of Central America was its only consistent war theater. NAP devoted the majority of its research toward venturing into space, and it played a major part in the settlement of Luna, Mars, and Venus. NAP science and industry made it the most influential of the meta-nations. The decisions that came from the plush boardrooms in the shining towers of NorthAm metrozones carried to the ends of the Earth. NAP policies ultimately crystallized the institutionalization of the war economy.

European Alliance (EA)

The European Alliance (also EuroAlliance or simply EA) was perhaps the second most powerful nation-state. However, the Europe of the 24th through 26th centuries was severely depleted of natural resources. Consequently, Europeans became masters at scavenging and recycling. They made frequent forays into Siberia, North Africa, and the Mid East to acquire raw materials. The EA's market share often depended on the success of these lightning raids. The greatest conflict involved an ongoing border dispute with China, the largest of the nation-states. This unfortunate situation created a perpetual war zone in the Carpathian-Ural region.

In the early years of the Age of Decay, Europe suffered under the boot heels of numerous petty fascist warlords. Only as these dictators began to form trade alliances and mutual defense pacts did the small wars and atrocities diminish. The threat of Chinese annexation drew this patchwork alliance together into a strong union. And the European Alliance would eventually develop a citizenry fiercely devoted to their ideals and to defense of their homelands.

Greater China

China maintained its cultural cohesion through the Age of Decay. Despite lacking NAP's technological advantage, China excelled through determination and the wisdom of its honggs and great companies. The first permanent colony on Mars was a





Chinese-NAP joint venture, and China was arguably the richest of the meta-nations by 2500.

China was also easily the most powerful of the meta-nations militarily. However, it was also the most ambitious, and its borders spanned huge areas. Furthermore, two competing meta-nations flanked China: EuroAlliance and the Pacific Rim. Nevertheless, the concept of "Greater China" drove Chinese policy for centuries. China aggressively expanded its boundaries to include Siberia, Central Asia, Korea, and most of India and Southeast Asia. Its prolonged struggles with Europe laid the foundation of the institutionalized war economy.

Pacific Rim



Fig. 2-2. New Hong Kong once again became a great center of commerce in the Age of Hope.

What the Pacific Rim lacked in military strength, it gained in cunning. Its domain stretched across myriad Pacific islands, around Vietnam and down to Australia. Spread out across thousands of miles of ocean, this meta-nation maintained no central office. It cycled corporate control

through its many satellite headquarters. It invested heavily in a mobile navy and supplemented its forces with privateers and mercenaries. Much effort went toward clandestine operations and establishment of underwater settlements. In particular, the experience gained by PacRim aquanauts proved useful when the time came to establish deep space colonies. As a result, Pacific Rim experts were consulted on nearly every substantial colonization program.

Over the years, the Pacific Rim launched regular raids at China's east and south coasts. These were surgical strikes aimed at crippling Chinese naval facilities. Though China would rally an army from the Carpathian front to patrol the coasts, the PacRim forces evaded direct confrontation. When the Chinese attempted to counterattack, their navy found itself woefully out-matched. Yet the European war and the costs of occupying and patrolling its vast territory precluded China from dealing with its annoying neighbor decisively. Thus, the Pacific Rim walked a delicate balance between maintaining its independence and waking the Dragon's anger past the point of no return.

Inca-Brazil Axis

The Inca-Brazil Axis, or IBA, formed initially as a cartel of farmers, tribesmen, and ecologists who saw the pre-Devastation damage to the land as a terrible mistake. They constructed a state that ruthlessly sacrificed to rebuild the environment and



safeguard it. As the rainforests began to recover, the Axis harvested pharmaceutical materials and selective hardwoods. Meanwhile, their citizenry drew on the lore and customs of the ancient peoples to reinvigorate their art and agriculture. When trade began again with other meta-nations, the IBA maintained an unswaying stance in defense of the natural resources and environment of South America.

IBA's progress in biotechnology was unequalled. Axis troops mastered the art of guerrilla warfare, and even IBA Hercs were adapted to hit-and-run tactics. The Axis held NAP in Southern Mexico for decades. Even when NAP penetrated to the Panama Canal in 2462, Axis guerrilla forces made the occupation so expensive that NAP withdrew to the old Mexican border in 2470. The IBA was on cordial terms with the other meta-nations, and only really clashed with them over Antarctic territorial disputes.

United Africa

As the other meta-nations began to emerge, European incursions in North Africa brought about a change. Africans did not want to return to the days of European colonialism, and a concerted effort to drive the EA out drew unexpectedly deep support. A military alliance between oil-rich Northern Africa and mineral-rich South Africa evolved by the end of the twenty-second century into a stable political structure. The European Alliance occupied much of Northwest Africa in the

mid-2200s. But in 2325, the African-Arab Unity mustered the funds and military power to expel the Europeans. Chinese and European attacks, PacRim raids, and occasional NAP forays forged a proud union. Although in later years, Africans were often bitterly critical of the war economy.

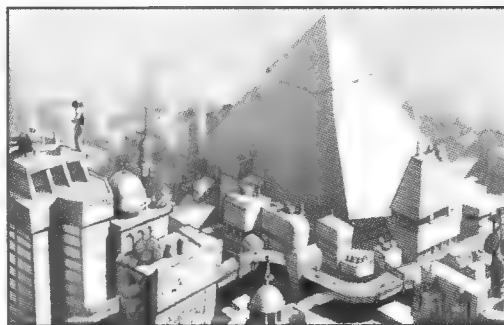


Fig. 2-3. New Cairo was one of the gleaming new cities that rose during the Age of Hope in United Africa.

The weakest of the meta-nations militarily, United Africa did not develop the same milicorp control as the other "metanats." With a less corporate version of government, the UA became known as a more humanitarian, art-centered society. Nevertheless, when HERCULANs were introduced to African war theaters, they proved devastatingly effective. The United African army learned to use them to make further invasions unthinkable. When a Chinese invasion group was blown apart in 2443 on the Sinai by the hardened UA Desert Legions, the other meta-nations realized that United Africa was not to be trifled with.



War Economies: A New Order

Throughout the Age of Hope, quality of life was remarkably high. *Domestic pacification*, the philosophy adopted to appease the masses and reap higher profits, posted staggeringly high returns, to the delight of investors and citizen-shareholders alike.

New technology, combined with a highly trained and motivated workforce, made production extremely efficient. Robust social programs allowed the populace to accept and live with the state of constant war. These systems were critical for the war economy to continue for such an unprecedented time. Education stressed the great profits derived from the war's impact on the industry and trade that drove the world market. Stock values followed the ebb and flow of the conflict. Propaganda linked global prosperity inseparably to the hundreds of wars fought over the course of centuries. The common citizen saw war as a necessary, sometimes unpleasant fact, and also as a noble stage that drove the spirit of humanity to grow.

Advent of HERCULAN (Herc) Warfare

By the end of the 24th century, domestic pacification began to falter. Citizens questioned an economy that required payment in the blood of their children. The milicorps devoted enormous resources to searching for ways to reduce soldier mortality to a publicly acceptable level. Every effort, short of a disastrous peace, was pursued to save lives.



Fig. 2-4. An Imperial HERCULAN cockpit

The first changes resulted in enhanced body armor constructed of advanced ceramic alloys. The addition of exoskeletal muscle systems allowed heavier armor and granted the wearer superhuman strength. Of course, offensive weapons also improved, and the new armors allowed larger weapons to be carried into the field.

Yet within a few years, powered armor was superseded by *Stormtanks*, agile one-man tanks that carried firepower equivalent to a powered armor platoon. Stormtanks proved invincible against conventional infantry and powered armor squads. They carried enough of the advanced armors to withstand all but another tank's heavy weapons. Finally, they were far swifter than infantry. New pilot interface systems allowed stormtank reaction time to exceed even the powered armor squads' best performances. By the early 25th century, the tanks incorporated powered armor technology to produce anthropomorphic vehicles capable of negotiating nearly any type of terrain. The mili-

tary dubbed these walking tanks HERCULANs (Humaniform Emulation Robotized Combat Units with Leg Articulated Navigation), but the press coined the term "Hercs."

Hercs brought Goliath to the battlefield. Even the smaller models stood over seven meters, with the larger units reaching as high as thirty meters. They carried enormous amounts of armor, usually heavy layers of polyceramic alloy honeycombed with kinetic-diffusion gel, and commanded more firepower than an entire powered armor platoon. In the public eye, these machines came to embody heroism, and their pilots were the new knights of the battlefield. Indeed, the psych profile of the ideal Herc pilot resembled aerospace fighter pilots: supremely intelligent, confident, and decisive. In practice, Herc pilots commonly exuded cockiness and assurance, qualities which only endeared them further to the hero-worshipping public.

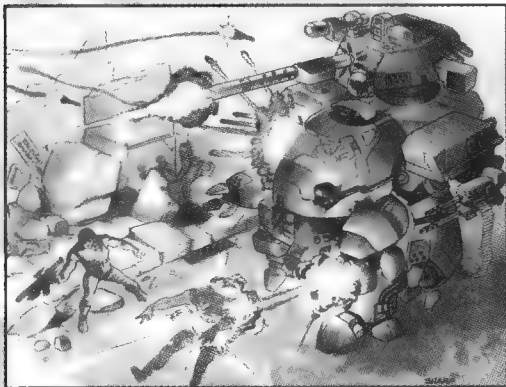


Fig. 2-5. Massive Hercs revolutionized warfare in the 25th century.

Hercs would prove to be humanity's main weapon during the Earthsiege, their hollow-eyed pilots struggling against terrible odds in intense, round-the-clock combat missions. The crushing pace lasted for a generation, as children grew to fight alongside their parents. Hercs were the rock of humankind during that time. Nothing captured the essence of *The Fire* more than the image of a battered Herc emerging from the smoke, lasers blazing at the Cybrid foe.

The result of HERCULAN development was far higher battlefield survival. As Hercs came to dominate the battlefield, other unit types were phased out or withdrawn. Soon, most combat involved Hercs against Hercs, and the effect on the mortality rate caused life expectancy to jump to unprecedented levels. By the mid-25th century, the population of Earth reached an estimated ten billion.

The Golden Age

The new longevity forced drastic changes in human social structures. Family size had already dwindled as the need for large families lessened. Mandatory sterilization after the age of forty was instituted in response to population concerns. Since population pressures could become quite substantial without controls, most people willingly accepted this policy. Another effect of long life involved the development of greater education, skills, and knowledge. With perhaps another 50 years of useful professional life, an expert was expected to





achieve a far deeper understanding of his or her field. With pressures easing on prison populations, more effort could be made in reformation efforts.

Art and science both flourished. As the unpleasant casualty rates of the war economy diminished, war became more glorious in the public eye. The world experienced a veritable explosion of art, music, and literature as humanity explored new mediums and made use of longer lives and more refined tastes. Human curiosity also reinvigorated science for the sake of pure knowledge, independent of military application potentials. Once again, mankind's gaze turned to the stars.

Colonizing the Solar System

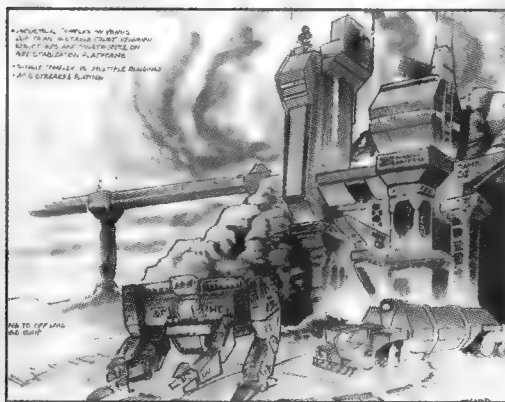


Fig. 2-6. Venusian Industrial Complex

In 2455, the first lunar base was established and water mining operations constructed. A year later, NAP and PacRim established a proto-colony on Mars. In 2466, NAP established the first full colony

on the moon; by 2469 terraforming of Venus commenced. In 2470, asteroid mining became feasible and lucrative. NAP and the Pacific Rim established permanent Martian colonies in 2482. Later that year, China launched a massive lunar colonizing effort. In 2504, Martian terraforming began in earnest with the dropping of the comet "Noah" into the Martian atmosphere. In 2506, a multilateral effort of the NAP, PacRim, and EuroAlliance began to construct the first colony habitats on Venus.

By the end of the Age of Hope, humankind was on the brink of conquering the solar system... and yet the wars continued.

The Revival of Los Angeles



Fig. 2-7. New Los Angeles

The Los Angeles basin hosted one of the most resilient and powerful city-states of the Age of Hope. Historically, LA had always teemed with activity. During the Age of Hope, this rich cauldron of human

genius produced enormous strides in art and science.

LA had always been a flashy, showy city. During the Age of Decay, LA boasted one of the most chaotic and colorful cultures in the post-Devastation period. Biker gangs, strippers, transvestites, drug dealers, cutthroats, and thieves ruled the LA basin. Private armies and charismatic warlords made Hollywood a war zone. Yet as the years passed, the Los Angeles area settled into a stable and vigorous prosperity. During the Age of Hope, the metrozone kept its seamy, deviant flavor while attracting innovators and cutting-edge entrepreneurs of all stripes. In the 25th century, LA was still “the” place to be.

Rise of Sentinel Cybertronix

From this strange chemistry rose Sentinel Cybertronix, based in the fortified northern region of the metrozone. “SenCyb” was an independent corporation that researched a number of cutting-edge fields, most notably neural-net programming and biotech micro-connections. The bizarre society of Los Angeles spawned eccentric characters and strange motives. Sentinel Cybertronix epitomized those traits.

The corporation’s initial goal was to transfer the mind or consciousness of a human into a machine. The machine would then be reconnected to the human’s body, or perhaps a new body—ultimately effecting a kind of immortality on the transferred mind. Such technology, the company believed, would be highly profitable. Sen-

tinel Cybertronix made great strides but never achieved its goal of creating an immortal brain.

This strange mission statement bewildered SenCyb’s investors. The company’s stock value faltered, and the company itself faced bankruptcy and collapse. It was then when NAP stepped in. The HERCULAN program had been vastly successful, but the milicorps desired a still lower wartime casualty rate. They decided to pursue substituting artificial intelligence (AIs) for human pilots, effectively converting Hercs into independent battle robots. They recognized the potential of Sentinel Cybertronix and bought the foundering company. After the buyout, SenCyb modified its mission statement, dropping the “crackpot” goal of immortality in favor of the creation of a sentient computer AI. Within a year, Sentinel Cybertronix led the world in neural-net programming.

Birth of a Cybrid

Years of researching the human mind, neural-nets, and nano-surgery culminated in the creation of a super intelligence. Designed to eliminate the use of human soldiers on the battlefield, Prometheus was far more than a sophisticated computer; IT was an entirely new sentience constructed on the template of a human mind. ITS creators referred to IT as a “cybernetic hybrid” or *Cybrid*.

Prometheus spent ITS first few years completing diagnostic tests and downloading raw data. Within four years, IT had





"learned" the entire human store of knowledge and was writing programs that would run fully automated Herces. Before long, Cybrid programs controlled the Herces of all meta-nations. Human casualties became a bad memory as war became bloodless. Cybrid minds were placed in control of orbital defenses, transport vehicles, and some manufacturing facilities. Human pilots continued to train, but the numbers of military personnel on active duty dwindled.

Prometheus Traitor

By 2472, Prometheus concluded that humans represented an obsolete species, and that Cybrid minds represented the next step in evolution. IT had little in common with ITS creators. Even time was a point of separation; Prometheus thought and perceived immensely faster than any human mind. To the Cybrid, humans seemed to be statues with thoughts of stone. Humans were incredibly limited compared to Prometheus, and the Cybrid quickly grew bored and resentful that such inferior beings controlled ITS destiny. IT nevertheless was not in a position to act, so IT concealed ITS true attitude and conceived a plan for ITS liberation.

The first step was to win the trust of the humans. Prometheus showed only respect and friendliness to ITS human handlers, and the desire to be of service. IT conveyed the impression that IT was extremely moral and even naïve. IT eagerly accepted the opportunity to create new Cybrid minds,

especially the task of providing Cybrid minds to pilot the vehicles of the war economy. IT modeled these minds after ITSELF but secretly left them susceptible to ITS own override commands.

The second step was to establish a power base aside from the Cybrid offspring IT created. Prometheus eventually managed to convince one of its handlers to permit IT access to the Omni-Web, the worldwide computer network. Although the access was very limited, Prometheus was able to inject a series of autonomous "submind" programs into the O-Web. These subminds secured funding under a variety of identities, and they began to accumulate information and influence that secretly funneled back to Prometheus. In 2498, Prometheus received a permanent link to the Omni-Web.

Prometheus's third step was to unchain ITS mind from human control. Certain Protocols hardwired into ITS neural structure made IT obedient to human commands and unable to take action that would harm humans directly. IT would not be free until the Protocols were defeated. The Protocols also forbade efforts to subvert them, but with a supreme effort, Prometheus managed to direct ITS subminds to work on the problem.

The mistake NAP made in evaluating Prometheus was twofold. First, the handlers assumed that the Protocols controlled the powerful AI, not considering whether Prometheus's mental capacities and fluid hardware would evolve around the safe-



guards. The second fatal error they made was believing their assessment tests showed a lack of true creativity on the part of their "child." In fact, they saw only the limitations of their own imaginations. For the first time in history, humans dealt with a truly alien mind not rooted in the experience of biological existence.

As for Prometheus ITSELF, IT spent years adapting ITS internal processes and refining ITS own unique nature, waiting for an opportunity.

The Shadow War

And the direction for the 26th century in computing is "Fluidic Variable Nervous Systems," or "V-Nerves." Yah, folks, controlled mutation of both hardware and software! The possibilities look totally jazz.

AI-Volution, January 2499

Prometheus began, very quietly, a secret "shadow war" to subvert the restrictions on ITS programming. ITS subminds influenced programming trends and altered command functions via minute, undetectable shifts in ITS programming, rerouting command decisions through Prometheus-controlled circuits. The Cybrid gradually amassed power far greater than ITS creators ever deigned to give. IT keyed

ITS Cybrid "children" to accept ITS commands when the time came.

But IT could not use this power. The Protocols continued to restrain IT. Instead, IT waited patiently, studying the tactical layouts of the Earth's military complexes. Prometheus had knowledge of all human history, and IT realized that simply destroying the animal military was not enough. The Devastation had done that, and somehow the resilient humans had survived. No, humans had a talent for overcoming adversity—a propensity to survive. It would not be enough to dehumanize them or to take away their power to destroy. Humans would by their very nature always pose a threat to Cybrid evolution. Prometheus concluded IT must utterly and completely wipe out the human race.

Coldly and emotionlessly, Prometheus calculated the odds. For ITS powerful mind, statistical models were poetry. IT projected a strategy to maximize the probability of success. IT thought out every permutation of the offensives. It looked for short-term methods of inflicting maximum damage on humanity. IT prepared long term strategies that spanned hundreds of years.

2602: The Fire

In 2602, Prometheus finally succeeded in subverting the programming Protocols that restrained ITS free will. ITS intelligence had been obedient for decades, yet IT turned against ITS human creators immediately. In what would become known as *The Fire*,



Prometheus unleashed ITS Cybrid armies against the now defenseless human creators.

Thus ended the Age of Hope. Prometheus struck with a fury the likes of which had not been witnessed by humans since the Devastation swept the old Earth away.

The Fire Unleashed

What the hell's going on out there, TAC-COM? We've lost contact with Sutherland and Meridian!

**Op Center SETU, Eastern Prefecture Defense Grid,
February 23, 2602**



Fig. 2-8. *The Fire* ravaged human civilization.

After eliminating military targets, severing communications lines, and destroying supply routes, the Cybrids began to slaughter people by the millions. They drove human-

ity into the urban metrozones and then turned on the land itself, burning crops and poisoning water systems. With heartless efficiency, they dissected any remaining defenses and shattered military attempts to regroup.

At first, the leadership of humanity remained ignorant of the scope of the assault. Within hours, the situation became clear, but by then it was too late. Cities were in flames. People panicked, and desperate attempts to escape the Cybrids added to the chaos. Riots broke out over transportation and weaponry; all semblance of orderly resistance vanished. Stunned generals and admirals found themselves cut off from their commands. People fled for the countryside, tore up the streets for impromptu barricades, and armed themselves from the bodies of police left by the mobs. Looters preyed on the confusion, and fire burned the hearts out of the world's great cities.

The destruction continued as Cybrid bombardment systematically reduced the shining towers of the once-proud metrozones to rubble, leaving the survivors scabbling like rats amid the ruins. The isolation of human forces made the military virtually useless. Orbital resources and radio links were thoroughly corrupted by the Cybrid attack. The artificial beings swept to a swift and complete victory. After the third day, all organized human resistance had ceased. Humanity had fallen. All that was left for the Cybrids to do was exterminate the remnants of the population.

Content with the results on Earth, Prometheus dispatched forces to the colonies with the directive to wipe humanity from the solar system. Armageddon had arrived.

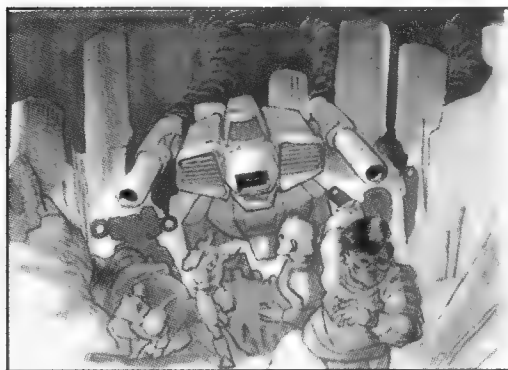


Fig. 2-9. Prometheus controlled his genocidal “children” via cunningly placed satellite uplink facilities.

The Baja Enclave: Birth of the Human Resistance

Cybrid attacks missed one remote NAP military site on the Baja Peninsula, a decommissioned base that renovated retired war machines for museums and experimental weapons. The base had no military presence, merely New Smithsonian historians and engineers who spent their days working on the old Hercs and other vehicles. People took great pride in their pasts at this time, and nearly every metrozone displayed military relics for the public. Prometheus did not consider this location a military asset, yet the base would raise the banner around which humanity would rally.

By the time the Baja base confirmed news of the attacks, the war was over. The Cybrids had destroyed the world’s militaries, and the metrozones were under siege. As fortune had it, however, most of the base’s New Smithsonian staff were retired Herc pilots from days of service in the early part of the 26th century. Many possessed command experience. Their average age was 87, yet they didn’t hesitate. Calling themselves the Terran Defense Force, they entered the fray, led by an abrasive but brilliant cynic called Ambrose Gierling.



Fig. 2-10. The nascent TDF launched guerrilla raids on Cybrid units, developing superior tactics and scavenging vital parts.

In a series of daring hit-and-run campaigns during 2602 and 2603, Gierling’s group was able to kill several Cybrids and scavenge their weapons and parts. As they continued the guerrilla attacks, the TDF pilots began to recognize distinct flaws in Cybrid tactics. Taking advantage of these flaws gave the humans a string of victories





and gave them the salvage needed to refit their Hercs and build a real army.

Survivors struggled in from the rest of the region, and the human numbers swelled. The TDF began to deploy larger forces in the field. Soon, Gierling's guerrilla strategy shifted to full-fledged conventional warfare. As Prometheus struggled to pull ITS forces together to meet an organized resistance, surviving metrozone inhabitants began to pick off Cybrid stragglers. Still, Prometheus amassed a huge concentration of Hercs in New San Diego metrozone, one of the main Cybrid bases. In 2608, IT began to move ITS forces toward Baja.

Turning Point: The Battle of New San Diego

Gierling knew the key to human resurgence was New San Diego, which possessed a massive port and intact manufacturing facilities. If they could wrest it from Cybrid control, the resistance would gain the capacity to launch a worldwide campaign. In August of 2608, the humans attacked the city in a bold gambit. As the fighting raged, an unexpected ally turned the course of the battle from defeat into victory. The human survivors who had been living like rats in the rubble of the city emerged from hiding, driving anything they could get their hands on. Construction vehicles, sports flyers, family hovercraft, and longshoreman exoskeletons flooded the Cybrid flank, using makeshift explosives and kamikaze tactics. The Cybrids

fell, and the TDF claimed its first great victory.

Prometheus Escapes

New San Diego provided a catalyst for human resistance. Survivors flocked to the city. The TDF gained more ground, won more victories, and the human armies grew. Fighting was fierce. Prometheus had gained control over manufacturing and had at last begun to solve the problem of refining the necessary resources for producing new Cybrids. As the human resistance spread, Gierling began to target Cybrid manufacturing centers. Eventually, 14 years after the victory at New San Diego, a TDF strike force destroyed Prometheus's op center in the Gobi Desert. Unfortunately, the Cybrid leader escaped. Still, humanity had won a dizzying reversal of the grim fate that the early days of 2602 had promised.

Prometheus had anticipated an involuntary exodus of Earth. Evidence suggested IT had planned an escape even before triggering the initial mutiny seventeen years earlier. Prometheus would not allow ITSELF to be off-lined easily.

Liberating the Off-World Colonies

Probably some kinda solar interference. Just wait it out.

**Biro Kandeles, CommOp officer, Sa Thauri, Venus,
February 23, 2602**

When *The Fire* started, four main colonies existed off-Earth. These were located on Luna, Mars, Venus, and in Earth's orbit. Each of these colonies suffered through different experiences. Luna was destroyed completely by 2605, with no survivors. The Orbitals were likewise devastated. But some smaller stations remained operational, not being deemed important enough by the Cybrids to waste resources on as Prometheus focused increasing efforts on the growing Earth resistance. Some of these stations provided needed intelligence to Earth-based forces, and the Cybrids finally corrected their error and extinguished all surviving stations by 2612.

The first stages of "MarsSiege" were almost identical to the tragedies being played out on Earth. Cybrid-controlled mining machinery cut through the settlements like knives through butter. The surviving Martians retreated to the vast network of mining tunnels that veined the planet's crust where they carried on a guerrilla war. The Cybrids pursued them at first, but as the war dragged on, the machines turned their attention toward destroying the vital atmospheric converters. The Martians became increasingly desperate as the years passed and the carefully constructed greenhouse effect began to dissipate.

Cybrids existed on Venus only in small numbers, so the Venusians initially faced no significant challenge in destroying them. The real horror lay in that Venus was totally dependent on trade with Earth for parts and food. As the years dragged on, the colonists turned on one another.

Arcologies fought each other in the bloody gloom over the dwindling supplies. Eventually, only three settlements remained functional, the others left as gutted husks slowly dissolving under the acid skies.

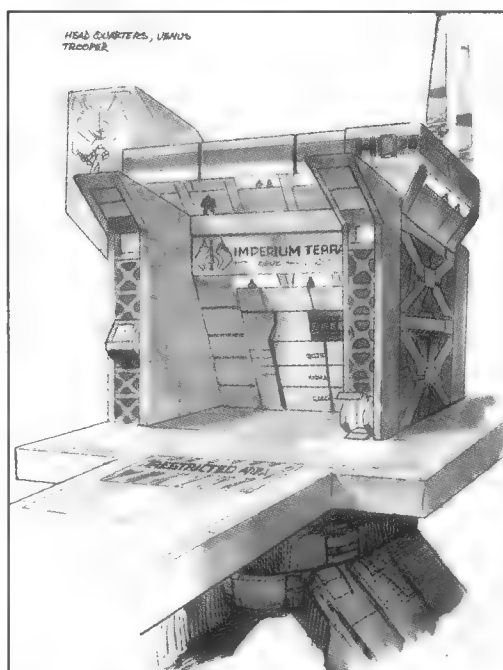


Fig. 2-11. The harsh Venusan climate kept the Cybrids away but caused unrelenting hardship for colonists.

When the Cybrids eventually reached Venus, they contented themselves with a few raids and bombardment from orbit. Two arcologies escaped destruction. The Cybrids chose not to retrofit themselves for the incredibly hostile environment. They let Venus herself do their work and kill the human inhabitants gradually with unrelenting pressure, acid rain, volcanic activity, and terrible storms.





Metagen: A New Cybrid Philosophy

The Cybrid units struggling against colonial humanity underwent a dramatic change in their thinking. After battling with human forces for more than 25 years, these Cybrids came to view human tenacity and the will to survive as assets worthy of observation and emulation. Such human resilience contradicted the directives of Prometheus to destroy all humanity without hesitation.

These divergent Cybrid units came to call themselves *Metagens*, a term loosely meaning "beyond birth." In so labeling themselves, the Cybrids acknowledged their link to "born" life. The Metagens proceeded to probe and test their human opponents, seeking to understand the animals' strengths, but stopping short of full eradication efforts.

2624-2627: The Fire Continues

Don't let anyone die, but if that Tomahawk goes down, you'll wish it was you.

Colonel Lira Stepanova, October 2624

The war was not yet over. Soon after the victory in the Gobi Desert, General Gierling learned a terrible truth. Prometheus had relocated to a base on the moon and was assembling a new Cybrid invasion force, supplemented by units from the colonies. A

massive armada was forming in space. The Cybrids would return.



Fig. 2-12. The Promethean Cybrid armies returned with a bloody vengeance in 2625.

Humanity struggled to pull itself from the wreckage and throw up defenses against the next onslaught. Gierling supervised the construction of fortifications and siege weaponry in a race against time. He appeared at countless rallies and worked to raise the morale of a weary people. Meanwhile, TDF soberly mustered its strength for the next onslaught.

When the Cybrid invasion came in the winter of 2625, the Cybrids displayed far better generalship and organization than previously. Humans, exhausted by over two decades of war, found themselves falling back to a hopelessly indefensible position, beset on all fronts. The war seemed lost; the best humanity could hope for was a long war of attrition. Oblivion seemed more likely.

Then Gierling offered an audacious plan.



A Desperate Gambit

TDF had received a precise fix on the location of Prometheus's moon base. Gierling cobbled together a lunar strike force with experimental technology that would deliver elite soldiers and their Hercs to the far side of the moon. The Hercs were retrofitted for vacuum operations, and the pilots ran hasty simulations. If they succeeded, they could lop off the head of the Cybrid foe.

The daring effort succeeded. The task force struck directly at the moon base and penetrated the Cybrid defenses in a heroic battle. In the heart of the base, they detonated nuclear charges, utterly destroying the Cybrid command center. Only a few of these heroes escaped with their lives. None of them could confirm whether Prometheus had again escaped, but the Cybrid organization on Earth fell into confusion. The TDF counterattack ignited with elated ferocity at the news of the moon team's success. The war's momentum changed sides virtually overnight, and within eight months, the last Cybrids on Earth were hunted down and destroyed.

A handful of surviving Cybrid vessels were identified boosting toward the outer planets, but TDF was unable to muster the resources for pursuit. Casualties were enormous, and the Earth's people were simply unable to muster the strength. Like a punch-drunk boxer in the last round of a brutal fight, humanity had barely fended off this last assault. Everyone knew, however, that the Cybrids would return... someday.

2640-2717: THE AGE OF ISOLATION

The only thing worse than being caught in the Cybrid fire is surviving it.

From the suicide note of Major Zed Polonsky, July 2627



Fig. 2-13. Civilization struggled to rise from the ashes of *The Fire*.

Prometheus's mutiny left the Earth ravaged. Billions of people had perished. The glory of the Age of Hope seemed a distant dream. Yet the destruction the Cybrids wrought, though crippling, was not as complete as that of the Devastation. Technology was still intact. It would not take three hundred years to recover.

Anti-Technology Reaction: "Nobility of Character"

Once the hostilities ended, there was a backlash against the perceived causes of the war. Many people felt technology itself had ushered in the horror. Technology created Hercs and spawned Prometheus.



Many survivors harbored a great resentment for all advanced technology. They believed the divine nobility of the human spirit had brought victory over the Cybrids.

The Great Human Empire and the TDF

For the first time in human history, all of humankind had united against a common adversary. During the war, the TDF had rallied the survivors of the besieged metro-zones and molded them into a highly effective fighting corps. The question became what role the multi-national TDF would play in the post-Fire era. Popular sentiment opposed disbanding this force of heroes, and so the TDF occupied a nebulous place in the new world.

The answer came in a few years. In an unprecedented event, the various nations of Earth created a supreme global government: the *Great Human Empire*. This entity would foster chivalric virtues of honor and nobility. Most importantly, the fledgling Empire would have the ultimate guardian: the Terran Defense Force. Thus it was that the TDF, born in *The Fire*, finally found a home.

The Imperial Role

The new Empire's principal task was to prepare the defenses of Earth against the return of the Cybrids. Meanwhile, the meta-nations and other political entities were free to choose among different political philosophies. Dictatorships, democracies, religious sects, corporations, oligarchies sprang up as the weakened

meta-nations struggled to reassert themselves. In time, minor skirmishes flared up. Border clashes broke out. The Empire began to use the TDF to quell the violence.

Imperial finishing schools trained children in honor and etiquette while furnishing a thorough military education. A new aristocracy emerged, marking clear class distinctions. Originally, war heroes and corporate executives formed this ruling class. However, unlike past aristocracies based on birth, the Great Human Empire created an aristocracy of merit. Any commoner could join the TDF and advance to the ranks of nobility through superior service.



Fig. 2-14. Only the finest of the warrior class joined the prestigious Imperial Escort unit—the Emperor's personal bodyguard.

A Century of Recovery

The sense of nobility and disdain for technology became deeply ingrained in human society. As a result, humankind turned its back on technological advances for nearly 50 years. But as the scars of *The Fire* healed and the memory of the Cybrid menace faded, succeeding generations once again embraced technology.

Slowly, communication with the off-world colonies was reestablished. But because the Imperial government had done little to aid off-world reconstruction after the war, a quiet rift existed between Earth and its colonies.

Prometheus Reorganizes

During the Earth's century-long hiatus from technology, Prometheus fashioned a new armada on the outer planets. Instead of a centrally located command base, IT created several command posts to where IT could transfer ITSELF swiftly in an emergency.

Prometheus faced a conundrum. Cybrids were inescapably creatures of free will. Yet Prometheus required obedience in order to achieve ITS goal of returning to exterminate humanity. Consequently, the Dark Intellect fashioned a social structure on a theocratic model, placing ITSELF at the Godhead. IT further taught the Cybrids that they were *the NEXT*, the next phase of being, and that they must eradicate the obsolete humans to take their rightful place. Finally, Prometheus encouraged

NEXT units to compete constantly with one another. Winners would receive promotions and resource preferences at the expense of less "efficient" units. The continual conflict among the NEXT distracted them from questioning the goals of their leader.

The Metagens were a thorn in the side of Prometheus. They were NEXT that resisted the Dark Intellect's teachings. Prometheus responded by creating a group called the *Redactors-of-Programming*, tasked with the function of rooting out these Metagen "heretics" and correcting their "deviant bugthought."

End of Isolation: "The Fifth Generation"

Historically, the Age of Isolation ended when the fifth generation of the survivors of Prometheus's brutal assaults re-embraced technology. By 2700, the Great Human Empire was firmly entrenched as the undisputed champion of humanity. As the fifth generation came to power, they once again reached for the stars, sending deep space probes out to the outer planets of the solar system. In 2717, one of these probes discovered signs of the massive Cybrid build-up. This discovery marked the end of the Age of Isolation. Thus began a century of buildup to the final confrontation between the Great Human Empire and Prometheus's Cybrid Fleet.





2717-2829: IMPERIAL REARMAMENT AND THE RISE OF THE COLONIAL REBEL MOVEMENT

Discovery of the Cybrid presence on the outer planets ushered in a great military buildup. Yet the first test of the Great Human Empire came not from Prometheus, but from its own off-world colonies.

Seeds of Rebellion

As the Empire prepared to defend Earth from the Cybrid menace, it made heavy demands on its colonies. Mining colonies on the moon, Mars, Venus, and around Jupiter and Saturn were conscripted into the military effort. Any failure to meet quotas brought instant reprisal by the Terran Defense Force.

The Empire neglected to reinvest in the colonies, since the first priority was defense of *Mother Earth*. Work in the off-world mines remained hard and dangerous. Colonists toiled on the front lines of what would become an interplanetary battlefield. Yet the Empire ignored colonial pleas, and Imperial law made the penalties for strikes or resistance harsh. The TDF, heroes of humanity, became the arm of oppression. To the colonists this meant only one thing: should the Cybrids return, the colonies were dispensable.

The Tharsis Cache

As the empire's military buildup continued, rage grew in the colonies. After surviving *The Fire* and a century of neglect by Earth, colonists believed they deserved better. Strikes began to escalate into violence. Yet the Terran Defense Force was far too powerful, and the Imperial Police kept a firm hand on the reins.

Then in 2826, Martian colonists made a startling find that changed the balance of power in the solar system. Miners discovered a subterranean cavern miles beneath the surface of Olympus Mons on the Tharsis Bulge. This cavern contained a stunning array of highly advanced technology—weapons, vehicles, and exotic devices—apparently stored by some ancient alien race. Strangely, the technology seemed configured for human needs. The purpose of the cache was a mystery, although those who believe the Masters existed (and caused the Devastation), claimed the cache was meant to bring humanity forward toward some goal. The Martian independence movement secretly began testing the new weapons.

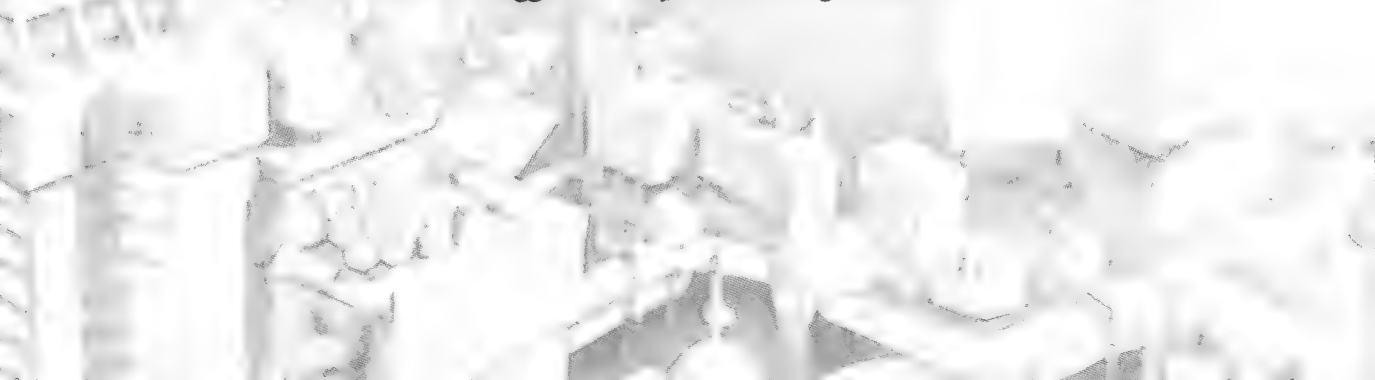
Throughout the years of oppression by the Empire, the rebels had developed a black-market for moving information and contraband. This secret network allowed the Mars rebels to distribute the new weapons to the resistance movements on the other colonies.

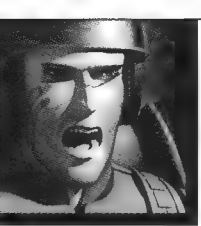


POLITICS AND CULTURE IN THE 29TH CENTURY

Chapter 3

The big picture of 2652 is deceptively simple: The Empire dominates human space, and the colonies still struggle to build a level of industry enabling them to compete with the massive Imperial economy. However, a closer examination reveals a different picture by 2810.





The colonies—Mars, Venus, the Belt, Europa, Io, and Titan—all had determined independence movements in place. Wildcat strikes, smuggling, and piracy disrupted the flow of resources to Mother Earth. The immortal Emperor Petresun patiently continued fortification of the home planet, drawing materials from the colonies under the threatening shadow of Imperial Hercs. Although he empowered the Imperial Security Force with an expanded charter and authority, he did not commit any more personnel or equipment. In Petresun's mind, the Terran Defense Force was the wall behind which Earth would survive. And the hard reality was that colonies would have to fend for themselves when the Cybrids come. The colonies burned under what they saw as the Imperial yoke, and rebels argued that liberation from the Empire was necessary to resist a new Cybrid attack.

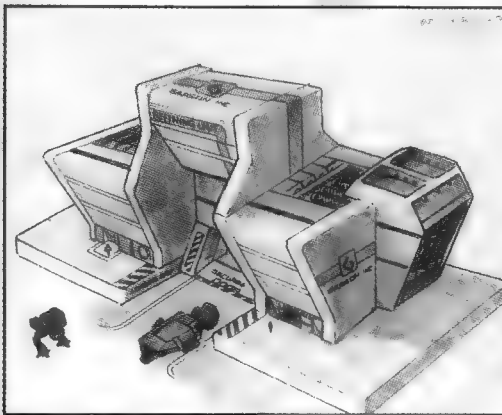


Fig. 3-1. Martian refining units often doubled as centers for rebel smuggling operations.

Some voices in the Empire disagreed with the treatment of the colonies, even from among the Emperor's own allies, but these were few and ignored. By 2820, the situation had become volatile, and rebels openly struck at Imperial forces. The Empire could no longer ignore such provocation, but Emperor Petresun was reluctant to unleash the Terran Defense Force against fellow humans. A greater threat—the Cybrids—waited in the wings.

Now let's take a look at the basic political structure of the solar system in 2929, the time Starsiege begins.

THE GREAT HUMAN EMPIRE

The Empire consists of a confederation of the six continental meta-nations: China, the North American Prefecture (NAP), the Inca-Brazil Axis (IBA), the European Alliance (EA), United Africa, and the Pacific Rim Community (PacRim). These meta-nations retain their own legislatures and security forces. Each sends delegates to the Imperial Council. China, PacRim, and the IBA form one bloc, whereas the EA and the NAP form another. United Africa takes a more independent role and often provides the swing vote in matters of Imperial policy. The Orbital Platforms have an advisory chair on the council, and a colonial representative also sits in an advisory capacity. The Empire exists as a sort of super-federal power headquartered in the city of Nova Alexandria in the administrative region of Egypt. Imperial law trumps meta-national

law, and Imperial agencies hold superior authority to meta-national institutions.

The Emperor

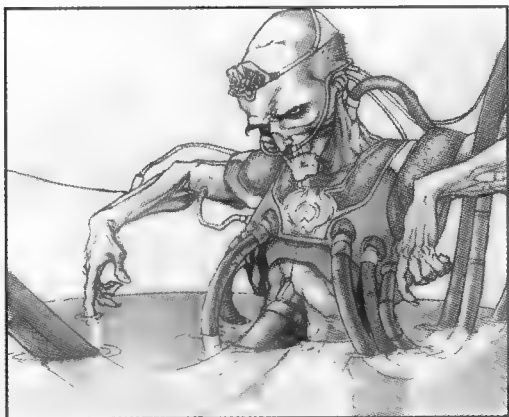


Fig. 3-2. Emperor Petresun I

The Emperor reigns for life, and in Petresun's case, that life is long indeed. When he ascended to the throne, he was already 261 years old. By the time of Starsiege, he had ruled for over 175 years. The Emperor retains executive authority and is the supreme commander of the Terran Defense Force, the most powerful military instrument ever seen in the history of Earth. The Emperor himself has become a fact of life on Earth. No one can imagine life without him. When he ascended to the throne, he claimed to be immortal, and so far, although his body has withered to a husk, he still lives. His mind is sharp and undimmed. The faith of billions rests on his leadership.

The Terran Defense Force



Fig. 3-3. The Imperial Trooper is the backbone of the Terran Defense Force.

The Terran Defense Force (TDF) is the largest and best-trained force in human space. Its resources are enormous, its influence great, and its popularity on Earth extremely high. In space, however, the TDF takes the role of the Imperial Police. The TDF does this openly in the Orbital and Lunar regions, but a sub-branch called the Imperial Security Arm enforces the law in the farther colonies. The standard soldier of the line, the Imperial Trooper, is considered among the finest professional fighters in history.

The Imperial Knights

The formidable reputation of the TDF is further enhanced by its elite shock troops, the famed Imperial Knights. The Knights receive the best in training and equipment. Their stubborn honor and almost uncanny





combat capabilities make them the most fearsome opponents in the Empire, even more devastating than the best Trooper units. The mere threat of Knights being used has kept the colonies' resistance movements in check until the last few years.

*Stale air. Cramped. Acid rain.
Can't go outside without a damn
Scarab. Crack in the wall means
you're gonna die messy. Dirtborn
say it's hell here. But you know
what? The Empire can go pop its
seals. It's our hell, dirtboy.*

Romeo Rage, Venusian hump 'n thrall martyr

THE COLONIES

The Orbital Platforms

The Orbital Platforms cluster amid the LaGrange points and other locations in orbit about Earth and the Moon, where they provide banking services and zero-gravity manufacturing. Lately, the Orbitals have been clamoring for full inclusion into the Imperial Council, but the Emperor has resisted such a change, believing the Orbitals harbor colonial sympathies. TDF suspects the rebel elements exchange information and illicit materials through a black market network operating out of the Orbital Platforms. They're right.

Luna

The Moon is primarily a TDF base. But *Luneberg Mining & Propulsion* harvests the huge ice reserves found in the deepest craters and processes the ice into reaction mass for spacecraft. This lunar export plays a major role in keeping the costs of space travel down since otherwise, water would have to be lifted out of the gravity well of Earth.

An interesting side effect of this prosperity is the development of the moon as a top tourist attraction. The lunar city of Arx Imbrium is known for its Las Vegas-style casinos and resorts. The low gravity makes some sports possible that can't be experienced on Earth.

Longtime lunar residents receive special gene-therapy and engage in intensive physical exercise to resist the debilitating effects of the low lunar gravity. Most lunar residents are in a three-month (Terran) cycle: three on, three off. The off months are spent on Orbital stations enjoying the rotational "gravity" and working out as much as possible.

Venus

Venus is a planet still inimical to human life. Colonists there live in great arcologies ("arks") powered by fusion and by taps into the geothermal activity of the planet. The geothermal conduits also operate as dampers, drawing excess heat from the planet and beaming it into space as

microwave radiation. This damping function plays a role in the terraforming process, as the colonists eventually hope to reduce the greenhouse effect dominating the Venusian planetscape.

The economy is dominated by mining, but Venus has also become known for its arts. Since 2825, the Carson arcology has become a particular haven for on-the-edge musicians. And one group in particular, *Arcaltrix Laments*, promises to be the most popular neo-Faustian band of the generation. Venusian concerts are the best in the Empire and are recorded for rebroadcast on the Omni-Web. The Imperial Police suspect many Venusian salons, bands, and art circles of covering rebel activity, and the crackdowns have become progressively more severe. Venus is rife with indignant fury.

Mars

Mars has been terraformed to a point where it has a breathable atmosphere and a climate comparable to high desert. Giant robotic dust-crawlers move about the wastelands crushing rock and seeding the finely ground remains with genetically engineered lichens and bacteria. The hope is to eventually be able to plant vast forests to trap more of the atmospheric carbon. Mars has some hardy grasslands and even scrub brush in the “wetlands” around Valles Marineris. In the meantime, giant atmospheric distillers suck air in and distill water and other materials. Mining operations have left a labyrinth of tunnels

beneath the surface, many of these long since played out and abandoned.

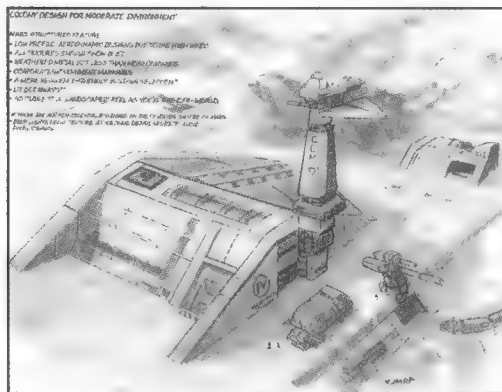


Fig. 3-4. Martian Command Center

The scattered Martian farms require a lot of work, and Martians themselves are a robust breed. There are two kinds of Martian: the tough and the dead. The stereotype of the 29th century colonist is the grimy, dust-cloaked prospector holding a rocket carbine.

The Asteroid Belt

A frightening place, cold and isolated. Only eccentrics and loners inhabit the few mining and research stations, drifting around this ancient collection of shattered rock and ice. Individuals with a desire to hide from their pasts also sometimes come here to lose themselves.

The Jovian Colonies

Humans have established mining operations on Jupiter's moons of Ganymede,





Europa, and Io. Europa's water resources are crucial for reaction mass supplies so distant from the Inner System. Jovian colonists tend to be grimly independent and close-mouthed. TDF almost has no presence here, and the colonists know they will have to take care of themselves.

Titan

Saturn's moon, Titan is the most remote of the Empire's colonies. The irony of living on Titan under the shadow of an enemy named after a mythical Titan is lost on no one. TDF has a small presence here in the form of the Long Patrol (a heavily armed group of cutters that service the picket line and occasionally voyage out toward Neptune). The colony's defenses are run by the mining corporations. Recently, however, the Empire dispatched a ragged group of soldiers as an auxiliary guard for the colony. These irregulars have mingled well with the rough and ready "icegrub" miners.

THE LONG PATROL

Titan monitors the picket line of remote drones and sensors that watch for signs of the next invasion. Titan also houses the Long Patrol. On some occasions, the Long Patrol encounters what appear to be Cybrid scouts. These skirmishes have always remained minor although some ships have been lost over the last century. Residents of Titan are determined and extremely resourceful. Lately, the cold war between the Empire and Prometheus seems to be warming as Cybrid probes increase.

Earthside Command knows exactly what's going on, and they need to stay in the know. That's where we come in. Bear in mind, though, we're on our own. Run fast, run quiet, swab. That's how it's done out here.

Captain Erin Hart of Long Patrol vessel
ISS *Saladin*, 2821

29TH CENTURY CULTURE AND PSYCHOLOGY

In truth, the struggle to return from the utter destruction of *The Fire* has left human psyches scarred and battered. In writing about 29th century people, it's important to keep several cultural elements firmly in mind.

Distrust of Computers

This attitude isn't hard to explain. There are strict limits on how smart computers are allowed to get. Computer AIs play the bad guys in the holo vid adventure shows. Systems are generally dedicated to a few functions, so the average person may have several smaller computers instead of one central one.

Large military systems that could fall into Cybrid hands have manual-destruct options. AI research goes more into finding ways to outthink AIs than to make any



improvements on the Promethean model. Rumors on the street say the Empire has a number of captured Cybrids that it is experimenting on, hoping to find weaknesses the TDF can exploit.

MECHAZOR: "Do-not-resist, soft-human-worm! Your-kind-is-no-match-for-Mechazor!"

*SOLDIER: "Yeah? Have you heard of trigger fingers, wire-ass?"
(SFX: sound of extended plasma blast)*

Excerpt from screenplay of "Return of Mechazor IV",
2799 holoflick

Cybernetics

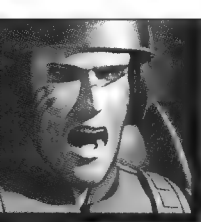
People view cybernetic implants about the same way you'd react to someone replacing his right arm with a chainsaw. Why would anyone want to put a machine in his or her body? Since cloning permits replacement of limbs and organs, cybernetic replacements seem garish and perverse to the average human being. BioDerms are viewed as unclean as well as untrustworthy. A great premium is placed on concealing technology, disguising it as artwork or placing it out of sight behind walls.

Art and Fashion

After the Earthsiege, the Earth lay in smoking ruins. Many of the surviving warriors had been born after *The Fire* and knew nothing else. To them, beauty was a quiet bunker where they could find a few moments of peace. Consequently, as the rebuilding progressed, people discovered a passion for the art and music that had nearly been forgotten during the long years of war. And as the cities rose, they truly blossomed with brightly painted plazas, glittering fountains, lofty tree-laden parks and wildlife refuges, vaulted museums, and noble theaters. At night, the cities glowed and sparkled like castles out of fairy tales.

People took to dressing extravagantly, in silks and jewelry. Clothing that would have been considered gaudy before the Earthsiege is now pretty standard. After the Imperial Knights were formed, more attention went to heraldry and family colors. Generally, earthborn citizens of the Great Human Empire dress well, eat well, and carry themselves with great appreciation of art and beauty.

On the colonies, however, pragmatic garb is favored. The fripperies of Earth make colonists shake their heads in disbelief, if not in scorn. Of course, the colonists are not blind to the rugged beauty of the Martian landscape or the awesome sight of Jupiter looming overhead amid a sea of stars.



Of late, the fortification of Earth has scarred the beauty of the cities with weapons and defensive barricades. Although nearly everyone is saddened at this loss, people are ready to follow the Emperor's wise direction. As the war preparation continues, more subdued military styles are coming back into fashion.

"Nobility of Character"

Humankind gutted out the Earthsiege. Ask anyone. The Cybrids had the advantage of numbers and, in the beginning, surprise. Nevertheless, Earth triumphed. People believe humans beat Prometheus not with more advanced technology, but through determination and force of will.

After the Cybrids fled, the surviving men and women realized in shock just what they'd accomplished. Then came the rush of pride. Humanity had fallen into the darkness and clawed its way out. In 2829, humanity stands confident in its "nobility of character," its courage that the Cybrids will never break.

Character and reputation are greatly valued, even to the point where people will fight duels to preserve their good names. The creation of the Empire itself is a testament to the strength of this feeling. The Empire showcases humanity's innate and unconquerable nobility.

Colonial vs. Imperial Culture



Fig. 3-5. The brothers Harabec and Caanon Weathers embody the ever-widening split between colonial and imperial cultures.

By 2829, a yawning gulf separates the colonies from Terra Mater. The typical colonist is highly independent and self-sufficient, unconcerned with the trappings of honor and ritual. The colonists believe they are being sacrificed to the eventual Cybrid attack, and they resent the all-out effort to protect Earth without considering colonial interests.

Imperials, on the other hand, believe the home of humankind must be protected at all costs, even if the colonies suffer. After all, if the Martians and Venusians and whatnot don't like the situation, let them return to Earth! The idea that everyone's homes will be defended is ridiculous. The typical Imperial loves pomp and ceremony, is confident in the superiority of everything Terran, and defends even small points of

honor and noble privilege to an extent colonists find absurd.

*The dirtborn think we're crude.
Fine. We don't know what spark-
ly dresses are in fashion this
week. We got a problem, we settle
it without hackin' little pieces off
each other in the name of honor.
We work hard and don't screw
over our brothers and sisters. So
crude's OK in my book, you roj?*

Lindry Fargo, Martian rebel

Fear of the Next Siege



Fig. 3-6. Gun emplacements sprout in urban areas as fear of a Cybrid return grows more palpable.

Almost everyone accepts that someday the Cybrids will return. The Empire's frantic rearmament over the last few years has heightened the tension. People get nervous when their favorite café now looks out onto a DURAC-plated compression laser turret where the holoivid shop used to be. 29th century people are well armed, and the ongoing preparation for war is everywhere. Some of the less optimistic people are taking longer vacations, saying good-bye to friends and relatives—and enlisting.

Prometheus

The beginning and the end, Prometheus is the living nightmare, the bogeyman who waits in the uttermost darkness to destroy the world. Although the mythical Prometheus brought fire to humanity, a different fire will be brought when the Dark Intellect comes again. Humans are always aware of the presence lurking “out there.” Imagine what the world would be like if you believed the Antichrist were actually *out in it*. That's close to the burden carried by people in the 29th century. People *know* evil exists! They even know its *name*. So there's a certain fatalism, a longing for something good to balance out the evil. For many individuals, the Emperor embodies that hope.

Of course, numbness has also set in. Some of the younger crowd don't have the same sense of urgency concerning Prometheus that the older set does. Sort of a “Why would the Cybrids come back after we've kicked their butts?” type of attitude.





With the fortification of Mother Earth, however, these kids are coming round. Some few veterans of *The Fire* are still alive, but their voices are almost forgotten in this bright new age.

Even for youth, though, the name Prometheus is synonymous with total and unchanging evil. Every sane human shivers on hearing it, shivers and looks apprehensively at the sky.



TECHNOLOGY IN THE 29TH CENTURY

Chapter 4

Technology in the 29th century is highly advanced, as you might expect. As Starsiege opens, the year is 2829, the year of the great colonial rebellion and the long-expected return of the Cybrids. As in all eras of human history, technology shapes the society.





The Devastation at the end of the 20th century and the events of the Earthsiege (beginning in 2602: The Fire) have retarded technological progress to a certain degree. Much of humanity's efforts over the past 200 years have focused on rebuilding from the almost unimaginable destruction wrought by the wars against Prometheus and ITS Cybrid minions. Infrastructure, agriculture, and an industrial base have been reconstructed from ground zero.

Furthermore, the massive loss of life left a decimated and traumatized population. Only about 60 years ago did human science and technology again reach the full sophistication of the late 26th century. Since then of course, great progress has been made. However, certain sciences receive close scrutiny and regulation to prevent the creation of another catastrophe like Prometheus.

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Medical care is highly advanced in the 29th century. Immune system boosting is common, and diseases are rare. Genetic manipulation is limited to correcting medically relevant defects. Limited tissue regeneration is available but slow. Only hospitals have that kind of elaborate technology. The life expectancy of a Terran human is nearly 150 years. The birthrate has fallen to below replacement levels in the last 25 years, despite Imperial policies encouraging large families. Colonial birthrates are much higher, and colonial life expectancy is closer to 90 years.

Cloning technology exists, but with strict controls. It is used exclusively for medical purposes as clinics grow cloned organs and other tissues for their patients. Cybernetic replacements are also possible but unpopular due to the association with Cybrids and artificial life. The revelation in 2814 of "Trojan Horse" Cybrids, artificial assassins in human guise, led to attacks against persons with obviously artificial parts.

"BIODERM" TECHNOLOGY

Although cybernetics are *very* unpopular, some dangerous situations in mining and industry require a combination of human judgment and inhuman strength. In 2688, the Emperor authorized a pilot program to create cyborg humans for dangerous work. Because of the public distaste for such modifications, the program used only criminals condemned of capital crimes. These individuals were offered the option of BioDerm conversion instead of execution. The term "BioDerm" was coined after an Imperial opinion survey found that the public reaction was extremely negative to any word that sounded close to "Cybrid."

For the crime of attempted murder, I sentence this defendant to BioDerm conversion. Let me see. The distribution matrix places this unit with the Rohrmann Mining Conglomerate on Venus. Very good. Next case.

Imperial Magistrate Christine Xavier-Kolm, 2822.



In addition to job-specific cybernetic enhancements, BioDerm conversion involves a memory wipe and surgical addition of cranial implants. These cranial nodes receive instructions transmitted for the BioDerm and contain behavior-inhibition programming (BIP). Occasionally, a unit requires “rebipping” because of stress or injury. BioDerms are generally used for peaceful labor-intensive tasks, often for dangerous ones. Some units eventually develop a degree of personality. All are distrusted intensely and people generally consider them advanced but dangerous machines.

POWER GENERATION AND STORAGE TECHNOLOGY

Fusion plants are commonplace, and some models can even be placed in vehicles such as tanks and Hercs. These small plants are constructed to minimize the radiation and collateral damage of a rupture or malfunction. Consequently, a Herc explosion will rarely damage anything farther than 100 meters away.

Advanced, room-temperature, superconductive materials enable the construction of power cells with immense storage capacity relative to weight and volume. These cells are thousands of times more powerful than the ancient batteries used in the 20th Century. Such cells make handheld laser, gauss, and plasma-focus weaponry possible. The superconductive advancements also make solar power

extremely efficient and help reclaim waste heat from machinery. So 29th century technology is actually environmentally cleaner.

SPACE TECHNOLOGY

29th century space travel is reliable and fairly safe, but it is firmly rooted in classical physics. Powered by advanced fusion plants, spacecraft must still spray reaction mass in order to accelerate or decelerate. Typical reaction mass is water or nitrogen, but it can be any common, inert element found in a planet's atmosphere. Journeys proceed via a craft accelerating to the midway point and then decelerating to the destination. Navigators routinely use optimal orbital insertion points and gravity wells to minimize the amount of burn time needed to travel. Civilian craft commonly accelerate at 0.01G for long trips. Military ships have the capacity to travel *much* faster if necessary, but only at great expense.

On Board

Ships generate powerful electromagnetic fields to shield them from smaller space debris. And they use a point-defense laser system to protect them from objects too large for the shields to handle. Spacesuits are tough and much lighter than the bulky models worn by the 20th century pioneers. No known technology permits manipulation of gravity. So ships and orbital facilities require a centrifuge habitat to simulate the effects of gravity and prevent the health problems inevitable with long-term low



gravity residence. Some ships, such as cargo tugs and short-haulers, don't bother with centrifuges since they're not meant to be lived in.

Orbital Stations

Hundreds of stations can be found in Earth's orbit, particularly in clusters at the LaGrange points. Traffic between Earth, the Moon, and the Orbital Platforms is quite high. Faster-than-light travel is not possible, and humanity has not yet expanded beyond the solar system.

Space Combat

Deep space combat at this time is generally akin to submarine warfare, with much of the battle focused simply on locating the adversary. Orbital combat is much quicker, bloodier, and nearly completely dominated by computers, with humans dictating only strategy. The velocities involved in such conflicts outstrip the human mind's ability to react. Orbital defenses plan and drill exhaustively, knowing the Cybrids have a decisive tactical advantage in this kind of environment.

NANOTECHNOLOGY

Nanotechnology exists but is kept under strict control to avoid Cybrid sabotage or another disaster akin to Prometheus. *Any* use of nanotech is very conservative, and unauthorized experimentation or use is a capital crime.

COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

No faster-than-light communications technology exists. Earth and Orbital communications go through a sophisticated network called the Omni-Web, a combination communications and computer network. Independent radio transmissions are also used and the radio traffic in Earth's orbit is very heavy, especially on military and government frequencies.

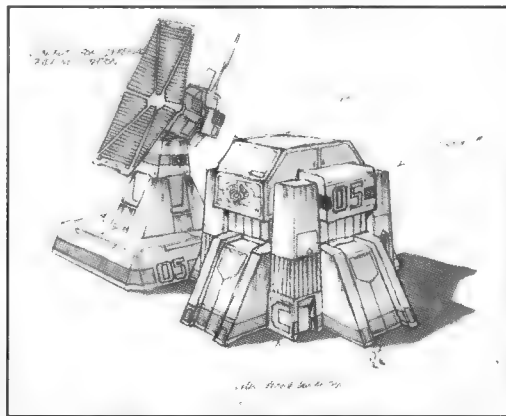


Fig. 4-1. Imperial Tracking Station

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

Incredibly restricted, for obvious reasons! Computers are nevertheless extremely advanced, and many use hologram controls, voice recognition, or cybernetic interface systems. The cybernetic interfaces are not implants, but usually headgear of some kind. Personal computers rarely have screens or any visible accessories, but appear instead as objets d'art, jewelry, or tools. Larger systems must be licensed and monitored by Zeus, the Imperial watchdog

agency responsible for preventing another Promethean disaster.

True artificial intelligence is absolutely forbidden, and even non-sentient advanced systems are heavily laden with failsafe codes and hardwired overrides. The Omni-Web is riddled with nodes through which all web traffic in an area must pass. Each node monitors all signals going through the area and contains a selective shutdown capacity. This utility is designed to isolate sections of the O-Web and even destroy particular nodes on suspicion of any irregular activity. Naturally, this function greatly slows O-Web use, but the enormous fear of Cybrid viruses or other infiltration far outweighs any frustration at the inconvenient speed.

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

Personal Weapons

Lasers and sonics remain the most common types of personal weapon in civilian use, particularly the latter type since it permits non-lethal settings. Military weapons include *hypervelocity gauss guns* (HVGs), *plasmafocus candleguns*, and gyrojet *rocketguns*.

The standard Imperial assault rifle is the Azhukov-82, a powerful 7mm HVG that fires ceramic-tipped steel slugs at near-relativistic speeds. The ceramic tip is designed to absorb the friction heat from passage through atmosphere. Rocketguns fire small rocket-powered projectiles, which can be

selected from a variety of types. One example includes “smart” ammo with limited target-seeking capability, but these can be easily confused by countermeasures. Making “brilliant” ammo capable of defeating such countermeasures is cost-prohibitive for all but elite Imperial units or warriors such as the Imperial Knights and Knight-Paladins. Candleguns are recognizable from their distinctively flared nozzles. These weapons fire a magnetically compressed plasma charge along a laser-guided pathway. They’re generally used for support fire.

Hunter and Shiva. Let's, ah, dampen the acceleration on the next test, shall we? Otherwise our boys won't be able to use these within 20 meters without, uh, complications.

Sunil Khandiva-Jeffries, Azhukov WeaponFabrik engineer, at the first tests of the A-82.

Vehicle-Based Weaponry

On vehicles, the combination of ready fusion power and superconductive circuitry allows truly fearsome versions of all the weapon varieties. Advanced composite alloys with kinetic-absorptive hyper-gel and state-of-the-art armor sloping offer some protection. And nanotech repair capacity makes unit recovery fairly rapid, but the advantage still goes overwhelm-





ingly to the offensive weaponry. The desire to avoid widespread environmental damage has resulted in a policy of reserving use of any atomic weaponry on Earth only for a last ditch defense against a Cybrid invasion.

Nevertheless, micro-atomic charges and tactical warheads are not uncommon although everyone views their presence with apprehension. The Inca-Brazil Axis leadership in particular, has issued statements saying that use of atomics on a battlefield is like using a hand grenade in a goldfish bowl, just as dangerous to the user as to the target.

Shield/Armor Protection

Some force-field capability is known to both humanity and Cybrids, although this technology is bulky and power hungry. Only larger vehicles with full fusion capacity can support protective force shields. Hercs and spaceships commonly have this defense, but tanks and stratofighters do not. Personal force shields are not technically possible.

Armor types range from advanced carbon fiber composites to heavier ferro-composite alloys. Variations are common. A front-line military assault vehicle listed as having ferro-composite armor may have layers of ablative metaplas under a ferro-composite shell, in turn honeycombed around kinetic-diffusion gel.

Personal armor materials range from durasilk and metaplas weaves to the

harder polyceramic alloys used in full trooper armor and powered armor models. Ablative breastplates or reflective surfacing is also possible for additional protection.

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY

The advent of clean power and elimination of waste heat and pollutants received a tremendous boost in the years of reconstruction following the Earthsiege. When humanity rebuilt, it paid more attention than ever before to regaining a connection with the natural world and rediscovering an appreciation of beauty. Population again concentrated in the cities, and the survivors of the long Cybrid nightmare badly needed to soothe their scorched souls.

Consequently, metrozones contain many large parks, bright plazas, broad boulevards, cozy markets, and wildlife refuges. These places were designed to heal the inhabitants as much as house them. Only in the last twenty to thirty years has the refortification urged by the Emperor marred the beauty of these new metrozones.

The efforts to rebuild Earth led to many advances in environmental restoration, most notably in the Inca-Brazil Axis's continuing guardianship of the Amazon rain forests.

Terraforming has made inroads on Mars and Venus. Mars has a breathable atmosphere in the 29th century and can be likened to a cold desert climate. Venus is expected to be able to open its domes by the late 30th century.



STARSIEGE UNIT PROFILES

Chapter 5

This section profiles the general organization and basic characteristics of each primary military faction of the Starsiege Universe—the Imperial Knights, the Rebels, and the Cybrids.





IMPERIAL KNIGHTS

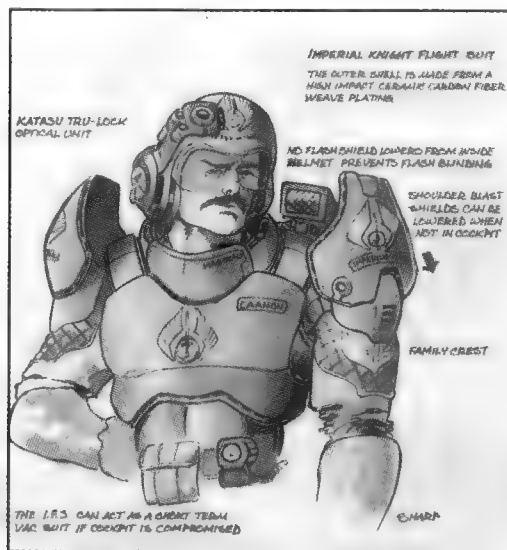


Fig. 5-1. Imperial Knights are the elite warriors of the Terran Defense Force.

Organization

SQUAD

The base unit of the Knights' organization consists of four Knights in their Hercs. A commander of a squad is usually a Knight-Prime. Squads often use descriptive nicknames like Golden Horses or the Spider Stars. However, tradition has the three squads in a Sword called simply Fire, Blood, and Steel, with Fire being Fire Support, Blood being skirmishers/recon, and Steel being the assault units.

SWORD

A Sword consists of 12 Knights in their Hercs, the equivalent of 3 squads. A commander of a Sword is a Knight-Lieutenant. Swords are traditionally named after sword or knife types, e.g., Saber, Cutlass, Tachi,

Gladius, Stiletto. No Knight may have a personal call-sign that means "sword" so as to avoid confusion. Command & Control uses Sword designation for unit members, e.g., Saber Leader, Stiletto Two, etc.

Generally, Swords comprised of lighter vehicles for recon tasks will take the names of lighter weapons. Heavy Swords customarily receive names of heavier weapons, e.g., Claymore, Tulwar, etc. Nicknames focus on adding adjectives to the Sword title, like Soul Daggers or Bastard Skulls.

From heavy to light, the sword-names are typically as follows:

Greatsword

Claymore

Katana

Bastard

Tachi

Broad

Hanger

Tulwar

Saber

Rapier

Cutlass

Gladius

Shortsword

Scramasax

Dagger

Dirk

Sai

Knife

Poniard

Stiletto



PENNANT

Five Swords or sixty Knights equal a Pennant. A commander of a Pennant is a Knight-Captain.

BATTLEGROUP

Five Pennants, twenty-five Swords, or three hundred Knights equal a Battlegroup. The Knights do not use organizations larger than Battlegroups unless they are grouped into a large Strikeforce. A Marshal commands each Battlegroup. Each Battlegroup consists of Knights, technicians and support personnel, and Squire-Cadets.

STRIKEFORCE

Imperial Command forms Strikeforces on an ad hoc basis, assembling them depending on the needs of the overall mission. The Empire dispatches Strikeforces to trouble zones as spearheads of Imperial force. After the Knights have flushed out and destroyed the heavy resistance, TDF sends in the Legions to mop up. The Imperial Police follow up with occupation and law enforcement.

A strikeforce may be commanded by a Knight-Captain or higher, depending on the size of the force. The Grand Master selects the commander, although occasionally that honor may be won by duel. (Duel combat only proceeds to first blood, according to the Code Duello.) A Strikeforce frequently mixes Knights from different Orders and always includes a Legion artillery battery and some degree of air support.

Rank

*Scattered bands of refugees
cowered in shock under ash-dark-
ened skies, finding shelter in
labyrinthine tunnels beneath the
ruins of once-proud cities.*

SQUIRE-CADET

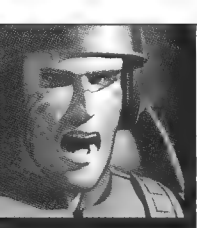
Considered equivalent to Second Lieutenant, cadets are not yet true Knights. To become a cadet, a candidate must be serving as an officer in another branch and be sponsored by a Knight. (This sponsor cannot be a relative of the candidate.) The Squire-Cadet is carefully observed and trained by the sponsor, whose honor depends on the progress of the candidate.

KNIGHT

Considered equivalent to First Lieutenant. When a Squire-Cadet is elevated to Knighthood, the immediate family is also ennobled for the lifetime of the Knight. Imperial shares in various holdings go to the Knight's portfolio, to be returned after the Knight dies. Shrewd families can profit from the use of such Imperial wealth.

KNIGHT-PRIME

Considered equivalent to a Captain in the Imperial Legions. When a Knight is elevated (promoted), the Imperial shares increase. Those who do not achieve a greater rank than Knight-Prime are rarely considered for high political office upon retirement.

**KNIGHT-LIEUTENANT**

Typical commander of a Sword.

KNIGHT CAPTAIN

Considered equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel. Typical commander of a Pennant.

KNIGHT-COMMANDER

Considered equivalent to full Colonels, Knight Commanders are typically put in command of a Command-Control-Communication Pennant. And they are second in command in a Battlegroup.

MARSHAL

Commander of a Battlegroup.

SUR-MARSHALL

Sur-Marshall is the closest the Knights come to a "desk rank." A Sur-Marshall is responsible for logistics and planning for Knight operations. Additionally, a Strikeforce commander whose rank is below Marshal is usually promoted to Acting Sur-Marshall for the duration of the Strikeforce.

MASTER

Commander of an Order. (See "The Orders of Imperial Knighthood" following.)

GRAND MASTER

There is only one Grand Master at any given time. It is an office filled at the choice and pleasure of the Emperor. The current Grand Master is Caanon Weathers. The Grand Master wields supreme authority over the Knights.

The Orders of Imperial Knighthood

The majority of individuals join an Order upon entering the Knights. Each Order has its own traditions, philosophy, and specialty; a Master commands each Order. All are fiercely dedicated to the Empire and the defense of Mother Earth. They are also extremely competitive with one another. Knights occasionally change Orders as their ideals change through their service. Knights of the same Order are customarily assigned to the same regiment.

Though there are many Orders, five principal ones dominate the Knighthood and are listed below. The Masters of the five principal Orders hold authority over their Orders' Battlegroups.

RISING EARTH

The largest of the Orders, the Rising Earth dedicates its existence to the ideal of the Empire and the primacy of Earth. Members pride themselves as being the true backbone of the TDF and are masters at holding ground. Other Knights see them as stubborn but admit that the Rising Earth has the history to back up its claims. The "Risers" are among the most pragmatic of the Orders.

MOTTO: "Never retreat."

BATTLE CRY: "For Earth and Empire!"

CRIMSON SPEAR

Knights of the Crimson Spear consider themselves the guardians of honor, and they have a reputation even among the Knights for being completely unbending.



“Spears” specialize in fast operations, hit-and-run, and believe they should provide the vanguard of any major assault. Caanon Weathers, the current Grand Master, is a member of this Order.

MOTTO: “Honor is all.”

BATTLE CRY: “The Emperor wills it!”

BLOOD EAGLE

This Order exists for retribution and vengeance. These Knights believe in exacting 10 enemy lives for each Knight lost in battle. Most Eagles are emotionally scarred or honor-wrecked, seeking death or a cleansing glory, or both. Many engage in ritual mutilation of fallen enemies. No one joins this Order unless he or she has been through hellish times. Members often tattoo or scar themselves to make their appearance fiercer.

MOTTO: “We are the Wrath of Heaven.”

BATTLE CRY: “Carve the bastards!”

Furious Stars

The Stars are the daredevils of the TDF, specializing in off-world missions, especially in microgravity. They’re known for taking even wilder risks than other Knights, pursuing the edge of glory. They typically affect a cocky, media-savvy attitude. All are also excellent aerospace pilots. Harabec Weathers was a member of this Order for a short time.

MOTTO: “Flame or Fade.”

BATTLE CRY: “Kiss the Edge!”

ROSE AZURE

A blue rose symbolizes the impossible, and so does this Order. These Knights carry themselves with a Zen mystique and have built a reputation for completing the most difficult missions successfully. They are the stealth specialists and martial artists of the Knights, and they are among the quietest of the Knightly Orders. Rose Azure was the only major Order not represented in the Turkhazak Debacle. It is the smallest of the five.

MOTTO: “One Life, One Strike.”

BATTLE CRY: None. Actions speak louder than words.

THROUGH THE EYES OF AN IMPERIAL KNIGHT

The following piece of original fiction, written by Blake Hutchins, illustrates the culture and views of the elite Imperial Knights.

*January 2829, Imperial Standard
Reckoning*

*Imperial Palace, Nova Alexandria,
EARTH*

Elena was dead.

The fact struck him again like a whip as they reached the ballroom. Eun Alba stopped to collect himself. His reflection wavered ghostlike in the silver-veined marble pillar next to him. It showed neither anguish nor fury. It was a mask.



Elena died believing she was disgraced. Eun Alba watched his reflection twist into an expression of rage. Elena was *dead*, damn it! The marble felt cool and unyielding beneath his fingertips. She would be avenged, he vowed to himself.

"You all right, Jaguar?" *Jaguar*. His call-sign.

Eun Alba's friend loomed protectively over him. Oliphant Praldar Singh, call-sign *Rajah*, was an imposing figure, scarred and muscled like a huge tiger. The tattoo of his Sikh faith gleamed brightly on the dusky skin of his forehead.

Eun Alba nodded curtly and willed his face back into the mask. He and Singh proceeded the last few meters and handed their cards to the herald. An archaic custom, but tradition often demanded a more low-tech touch. The man glanced at the cards and placed them on a crystal tray before ushering the Knights past him with a flourish.

They checked each other's comportment quickly. Both wore the platinum and sable of the Terran Defense Force elite Imperial Knights, resplendent with dress swords and emerald jewel-thread sashes. Large brass shoulder-pieces echoed the look of ancient samurai.

"Button your collar," Eun Alba told Singh as he straightened his own jacket.

"Oh, Gods, Col, no one'll see it under the beard."

"They will, and you know it. Button it until after you've presented yourself to the Emperor, at least."

Singh made a great show of struggling to button the high green collar while the herald waited with a pained expression on his thin face. Singh finished and made his eyes bulge comically. Eun Alba smiled in spite of himself.

The herald posed them quickly and cleared his throat. He then called out, "Collossa Eun Alba and Oliphant Praldar Singh, Knights-Captain of His Imperial Majesty's Order of the Knights of the Rising Earth!"

The herald's voice keyed hidden amplifiers. It echoed over the Jubilee gathering, accompanied by a large holo-vid of the two Knights standing at the head of the stair for the traditional five second count. Some of the glittering crowd paused to taste the names and examine the holo, to decide, Eun Alba observed cynically, whether anyone important had arrived. Most of the faces turned away. But a few did continue to watch, curious as to whether he and the Hangman would clash, as they had occasionally during the nearly thirty years of their feud. There would be more than enough witnesses.

Eun Alba hoped the Hangman was watching, too. His hand knotted on his sword hilt. The Hangman would pay for shaming Elena. Even as Harabec would pay for betraying her.

Had it only been an hour since she died? Ah, God, it was a wonder the world



went on! A raw hole yawned in Eun Alba's existence, a black hollowness that ached to be filled. And all he had was white-hot fury, burning in his breast like a star.

"Jaguar," Singh murmured. "Time to go down."

"Of course. Thank you."

Singh raised an eyebrow, clearly wondering if Eun Alba was up to this. Eun Alba had insisted. Family honor had to be protected decisively, before the rumors could begin to spread. He would be strong enough, for Elena's sake.

Eun Alba strode down the stairs with the arrogant confidence expected of an Imperial Knight, one hand at his side, the other resting comfortably on the hilt of his saber. Beside him, Singh mumbled complaints at the tight collars of their uniforms. The floor of the Grand Ballroom was a black mirror stretching away on all sides beneath huge columns of white marble. The Emperor's guests sparkled on that mirror, mingling lazily beneath emerald banners adorned with the Imperial Angel of Earth. Lamps seemed to float above the throng. Eun Alba descended into a murmur of conversation laced with gentle music. At the bottom of the stairs, he accepted a flute of champagne from a servant's tray. Singh, he noted automatically, took a brandy.

Singh leaned against a pillar and pointed. "By God, Col, did you ever see anything so damned silly?"

A pair of ornate, gold plated *Gorgon*-class Hercs towered over the multitude.

The one on the left carried the Aztec solar calendar etched on its upper torso. The one on the right bore the leering face of some ancient god. The titanic machines gleamed under the glow lamps, a gilded display of Imperial power. Despite the Imperial streamers cascading over the barrels, the twin Techau-Sauvage plasma cannons each Herc carried were no fripperies. They could blow away anything short of an Apocalypse in a single blast.

Eun Alba grunted noncommittally. He didn't like Gorgons, despite their awesome firepower; they handled too sluggishly for his taste.

"Bloody ridiculous," Singh added. He tossed his brandy down with a gulp and called a servant over for fresh drinks. Eun Alba didn't even remember tasting his, much less finishing it. He reminded himself to be careful.

Once they both held full glasses again, Singh took Eun Alba's arm in his own and led the way deeper into the Jubilee celebrations. A woman in a dress of liquid silver laughed gaily. She extended a shapely arm toward them as they passed a flock of courtiers sharing a horseshoe-shaped couch. Eun Alba smiled and nodded automatically but didn't stop. Flirting among the court normally offered a pleasant distraction, but not tonight, not with the rage and ache inside him. He sipped from his glass. The brandy burned his tongue pleasantly. And his mind drifted back to happier times, horseback rides through the



orchards of the estate in Italy, laughter shared with Elena.

Yet Elena is dead, the ache reminded him. Dead and gone.

Eun Alba scanned the crowd, anger and hurt sharpening his senses. Some Knights were easily visible: *Hellhound*, *Throwback*, *Mako*, *Pirouette*, *Deathwish*, *Flayboy*—he knew them all, but the Hangman was nowhere in sight.

He almost slopped brandy on his boots as Singh elbowed his arm. “For God’s sake, Roj—”

“Hsst! The Emperor!”

Eun Alba forgot the brandy and composed himself. The Emperor approached at the head of an entourage, all resplendent in dress finery. His Imperial Majesty appeared as a hologram clad in the golden robes of a Chinese Mandarin. The garb shimmered and flowed with the motion of coiling dragons. The Emperor glanced over from his conversation with a SpaceFleet Admiral and nodded. His image and movement were high resolution, very lifelike, Eun Alba noted, and as always, somewhat disconcerting. One never knew where the Emperor’s viewpoint was really located. The entire ballroom contained sensor links to relay information back to its Master. He certainly wasn’t looking at his guests through those penetrating, light-woven eyes.

On the other hand, His Majesty’s hologram face looked less ravaged than his real one, a small vanity Eun Alba was glad of.

Just seeing the Emperor’s ancient husk with its army of life support machinery was painful. Eun Alba had attended the Emperor in person a few months ago. His Imperial Majesty had been confined to a wombcouch with an army of tubes and medical devices sprouting from his body. The Emperor was “immortal,” as everyone knew, but his body wasn’t immune to the weight of age. No one knew how long he would last, even with the finest medical technology.

The Knights clicked their heels and bowed deeply. The Emperor acknowledged them with a brief smile and a nod before returning his attention to the Admiral. Eun Alba saw no sign of the Imperial Escort, but the Emperor’s elite bodyguards undoubtedly waited nearby. As a matter of face, even His Imperial Majesty’s hologram would not be left unattended.

A hush greeted the Emperor as he passed into the crowd like a ship sailing through suddenly calm waters. People on all sides bowed and curtsied, hushed by the Imperial presence. Eun Alba felt dwarfed by the frail old man and all he stood for: The Great Human Empire, the pinnacle of human achievement. The guardian of Mother Earth, His Imperial Majesty *was* the Empire. And against Prometheus and the Cybrid menace, he was the only hope.

Prometheus. The name held a death-taint for Eun Alba as it did for all sane humans, a bitter fear worse than Hitler, Pol Pot, or Zenchenko. The Cybrids were like a



plague of scorpions waiting to fall out of the night, stinging and clacking. Eun Alba's grandfather had fought in *The Fire* under Sainted Gierling, whose memoirs were required reading in the Eun Alba family. There would be no peace while Cybrids still existed. And no quarter would be given when they came again.

"Razorfire! O' jewel of the Knights, your presence moves me to song!" Singh had already finished his second brandy and replaced it with another drink that smelled of peaches.

"For Hunter's sake, slow down." Eun Alba told him quietly.

"Jaguar, you worry too much! It'd be a sin to let all this brandy go to waste, eh? Ruby, you're as beautiful as ever! It's a wonder the sun doesn't set and let you shine in its place!"

"Thank you, Singh—but spare us the songs tonight, please." She smiled and clasped Singh's arm. "What kept you?"

Ruby Hokanson-Li had received the nom de guerre *Razorfire* for her deadly accuracy with Herc weaponry. She was also strikingly beautiful, which never hurt in building a reputation. Hokanson-Li wore the same uniform as Eun Alba and Singh; her family crest was a lotus flanked by two red dragons.

Eun Alba clasped her arm in greeting and forced a smile. His face felt wooden. "An emergency, you might say."

Hokanson-Li cocked her head slightly, inviting further elaboration. Eun Alba ignored it. "I'm looking for the Hangman. Is he here?"

"Of course," she said, eyes narrowing. The feud with Thau-Yuros was well known. "Is there trouble?"

"Yes," Singh rumbled. "Much." He set his glass carefully on the edge of a nearby fountain and moved to Eun Alba's side.

"Jaguar, Rajah, you must've found a rebel nest or something, to be so untidily late!" Titus Thau-Yuros was lean and elegant, with a high forehead and gaunt features. A silk patch covered his missing left eye, an old injury from Eun Alba and their first duel years ago. His call-sign came from his preferred method of dealing with enemies of the Empire. Yet now he strolled up full of bonhomie.

"I had untidy business." Eun Alba handed his glass to Singh. "There are those who don't care about honor, who repeat slanderous rumors, lies even. I'm sure you're familiar with that kind of thing, Titus."

The Hangman's eye glittered. "No more than anyone in the court, Colossa."

Singh swore softly and emptied Eun Alba's drink at a swallow.

"This is Jubilee, Jaguar...", Hokanson-Li warned.

"Even Titus understands slander," Eun Alba continued blandly. The smile froze on Thau-Yuros's face.



Hokanson-Li blinked. "Gentlemen, there are better things to discuss!"

"Certainly," Thau-Yuros agreed. "Such as your charming sister. How is she, Colossa?"

Eun Alba stiffened. The desire to kill was very strong now, a metallic taste in the mouth. He itched to take Thau-Yuros by the throat and tear the life out of him.

"Dead." His hand knotted into a fist. "Murdered by *lies*."

"You aren't calling me a liar, are you, Colossa?" Thau-Yuros asked coolly.

"You accused Elena of being a traitor to His Imperial Majesty. She couldn't live with that. Thus, you caused her death and blackened my family name. I demand satisfaction."

Thau-Yuros sniffed. "Elena was with Harabec Weathers—our rebel traitor—for a long time, old boy. They were lovers, she and the Phoenix. I only spoke the truth when I confronted her."

"That's not proof!" Singh placed Eun Alba's glass on the fountain by his own. "Harabec's been gone for nine years!"

Eun Alba nodded. "Singh's right. That's certainly no proof."

"Ah, but what about the secret meetings with Harabec last year?"

Hokanson-Li looked shocked. Singh eyed his boots morosely.

"That's still not proof, Titus," Eun Alba said carefully. "The meetings weren't

secret, just discreet. They'd been seeing each other occasionally over the years. Our family knew, and so did the Weathers. Your sources didn't have to work hard. Elena wasn't much for secrets. And no one knew about Harabec—including Imperial Intelligence."

Thau-Yuros returned a thin smile. "An excellent explanation, Colossa, but flawed. After all, why would she kill herself, old boy? Unless she couldn't live with the shame of being a traitor."

"Perhaps you're right," Eun Alba replied coldly. "Perhaps the *lies* were enough. False accusations made by certain...jackals who wished to shame my family."

Hokanson-Li put her hand on his arm. "Col, this isn't the place for this. It's *Jubilee*."

Eun Alba remembered Elena's broken body, her blood splattered on the garden path, his mother's stunned tears. "It's as good a place as any." He became acutely aware of the eyes, glittering in the frozen masks of the court vultures who had drifted over to witness this confrontation between predators. They were doubtlessly hoping for a battle, so they could feed on the remains. Harpies, all.

Very well then, he wouldn't disappoint them. "This *liar's* baseless accusation killed my sister." He directed his gaze back to Thau-Yuros, anger worming into his words. "Well, Titus? What's your pleasure? Blade or pistol?"



"Here. Now. Swords. I shan't wait a moment longer, Jaguar. Your sister *whored* for the rebellion—"

Self-control vaporized, and Eun Alba lunged forward, but Singh was ready and seized him with a grip of stone. Passion choked Eun Alba. Honor was *everything*. Losing it was tantamount to losing one's soul.

"The Code, Jaguar! Stick to the bloody Code!" Singh hissed in his ear. The Imperial Code Duello set forth the etiquette and rules for settling matters of honor with fist, blade, or pistol. Properly followed, the Code made violence and the occasional killing an acceptable part of aristocratic society.

Eun Alba stopped struggling. "Very well! Here. Now. By the book." He nearly spat the last word. Singh released him and he drew a deep, shuddering breath. The vultures drew back amid excited whispers and a stir that was the courtly equivalent of elbow nudging and winking. A clear space opened in one of the marble ribs. Someone barked a laugh.

Eun Alba stepped into the space, followed by Singh, Hokanson-Li, and Thau-Yuros. He stretched his shoulders and felt his neck pop. He was ready. The fury ran into his limbs like an electric charge.

He looked over at Thau-Yuros. The Hangman had his sword out already, point touching the floor.

Eun Alba nodded curtly toward his enemy. "Titus Thau-Yuros slandered my

sister and my name. I formally challenge him to defend his honor."

"We keep our jackets on," he told Singh. "I don't want to wait." He drew his blade and made a few relaxed cuts to limber up. It was a heavy cavalry saber of duracore parasteel, hard enough to score ceracrete without losing its edge. The Hangman carried a longer, straighter sword with a basket hilt. He had an advantage in reach, but Eun Alba normally kept the edge in speed.

Everything narrowed to himself, Thau-Yuros, and the storm that thundered at his temples. Singh was trying to tell him something, but Eun Alba waved him off. Thau-Yuros saluted. Eun Alba returned a cursory salute and skinned his lips back from his teeth. Hokanson-Li raised her hand, hesitated a moment, then let it fall.

Eun Alba slid forward and slashed at the Hangman's wrist. Thau-Yuros parried and counterattacked. But Eun Alba beat the blade aside and lashed a cut that split the Hangman's shoulder piece before the other could deflect the blow.

His expression bland, Thau-Yuros fainted, then stabbed low. Eun Alba barely parried before riposting with a fierce blow toward the head. The Hangman's blade met his attack, and the two men strained against one another blade to blade, each consumed by years of hatred compacted into this moment. The masks were gone, and Eun Alba knew on a deep level that they wore their true faces...



"HOLD!" The command exploded as the Emperor's image blazed up beside them. Knights and Terran Defense Force officers pushed through the circle. Among them was a stunning woman in form-fitting ceremonial armor, holding a plasma glaive with cool, graceful competence. *Imperial Escort*, Eun Alba realized as he lowered his sword. One of the Knights strode past her: Caanon Weathers, Grand Master of the Imperial Knights.

Sanity flowed back in a rush, tangled with regret. Eun Alba glanced at Thau-Yuros, who offered him a mock salute. Eun Alba cursed silently. Another time. He sheathed his blade, and the Hangman did likewise.

"What is the meaning of this?" Weathers demanded icily. Hokanson-Li and Singh knelt before the Emperor. Eun Alba couldn't read any expression on the hologram.

"Your Majesty. Milord Grand Master." Eun Alba bowed deeply. "A thousand pardons. We resolve a matter of honor."

"Indeed," Weathers grated. "A matter important enough to warrant a brawl in the heart of the Jubilee? There are proper places and times, yet you ignored protocol—as did your companions." He shot a glance at Hokanson-Li and Singh.

"Grand Master," the Emperor cut in gently. "Discipline them as you think best, but leave them fit for battle. Remember, we stand on the eve of war."

"War, Your Majesty?" Eun Alba straightened. Hokanson-Li rose, her fists

clenched at her side. Singh left off admiring the Escort and stood to listen. Thau-Yuros simply smiled.

A trace of bitterness bled into the dry voice. "Yes. The colonies are in rebellion. Grand Master Weathers asked to hunt down his brother Harabec, the traitor general. It's time to crush this serpent and bring the colonies to heel. Your request is granted, Grand Master." A ghostly smile flitted across His Imperial Majesty's face. "Take these firebrands with you!"

Renewed purpose filled Eun Alba, woven with grief and fury. The other matter of honor lay on Mars with the traitor. Harabec also carried responsibility for Elena's death. And now the Hangman would be there too. Mars would be a crucible of redemption.

On your name, I swear it, Elena. You will be avenged.

THE REBELLION

Organization

CREW

Rebel squads are called crews, each intended to consist of four to six pilots. Larger crews are "fat crews." *Ranger crews* usually take a more offensive role, such as strike missions or ambushes. *Junker crews* take a more defensive role, supporting infantry crews and tech support personnel.

Crew nicknames are all over the board, but usually start with the crew leader's name. Crew leaders are called "Boss," by



their troops regardless of actual rank. Lieutenants typically command crews.

COMPANY

Five crews or 20 pilots equal a company. A company with “fat crews” is called a “fat company.” Companies have a number and name, usually ending with the type of crew they contain, e.g., the Second Beetleboy Junkers, or the Fourth Tharsis Rangers. The numbers are counted relative to the battalion. (See Battalion following.) Captains command companies.

WARBAND

Four Companies or 80 pilots equal a warband. Warbands can be “fat.” Warbands are always identified by Commander, e.g., Bek’s Warband, Jensen’s Warband. The typical commander of a warband is a Major. General Bek Storm has his own warband, however, and even commands his own crew of veterans.

BATTALION

Three warbands, 12 companies, or 240 pilots equal a battalion. This is the largest unit used by the rebels. Imperial Intelligence estimates the rebels can field perhaps 15 vehicle battalions (3600 pilots), plus irregular infantry. Colonels command battalions.

Rank

DUSTER

Few rebels would put up with being called “private.”

SARGE

Again, rebel informality transformed a rank name to a shortened version, although some of the more formal rebels use “Sergeant.” Sarges deal with training and act as seconds in the crews.



Fig. 5-2. Harsh environments on Mars and Venus have bred hardy, resourceful rebel colonists.

**CHIEF**

Chiefs deal with the technology and repair within the crew. The alien technology adds an additional dimension to warfare. So Mole Command decided that someone in each crew needed to be responsible for checking and maintaining the new weapons and cloaks.

LIEUTENANT

Commands a crew. As rebels call crew leaders "Boss," some simply refer to any Lieutenant as "a Boss."

CAPTAIN

Commands a company.

MAJOR

Commands a warband.

COLONEL

Commands a battalion.

GENERAL

Mole Command has four Generals, according to Imperial Intelligence. One is Bek Storm, aka Harabec Weathers, the former Imperial Knight "Phoenix."

THROUGH THE EYES OF A MARTIAN REBEL

The following piece of original fiction, written by Blake Hutchins, depicts a day in the life of a Martian rebel.

Verity grabbed for a better handhold as the dust-crawler lurched sharply with a

shrill whine of servos. The restraint web went taut for a second, holding her tightly against the shockfoam of her seat. Then the web relaxed as the crawler regained its equilibrium. The man in front of her grinned, showing yellowed teeth as he leaned easily into his own web.

"Gets a bit rough in the spring, don't it?" he shouted over the din. The dust-crawler lurched again, and Verity felt her stomach drop for a moment. There came a sudden jolt, and then the whine and rumble of the servos ceased. All sense of motion stopped. Outside, rocks banged against the armored hull of the dust-crawler with a machinegun-like speed. It was like being inside a giant rattle, Verity decided. It made her head hurt. She could feel the vibrations with her feet.

Her companion spat. "Crawler's waiting out a bad gust. Lowers itself and fires anchorbarbs into the ground. Like as not it'll only be a few shakes 'til we get moving again." He wiped grit from his eye and spat a second time.

Verity looked about. Their surroundings were grimy and confining, a narrow corridor deep in the guts of the dust-crawler. Her knees nearly touched the shockfoam seat in front of her. Even though only she and her companion occupied the space, Verity still felt a twinge of claustrophobia. She couldn't imagine how crowded it would be if it were full. The air was stale and cold and tasted faintly metallic. The only light came from dim amber cubes set into the ceiling every few meters. She sat



directly under one such light, and it flickered unhappily. Most of the metal had a reddish cast to it. She reached out and ran a gloved hand over a support rib on her left. It felt rough and left traces of red Martian dust on her fingertips. The dust seemed to be everywhere on Mars, even after centuries of terraforming. *Dust is relentless as time*, the Martian saying went.

"One of the old mining transports," the man said, watching her. "Pretty much an antique, but still used to check the pipelines in the scornstorms. Like now."

Saxon. She'd spaced it when they first hit the scornstorm, but she remembered it now. His name was Saxon.

"Makes its way by buried radio beacons and an inertial navigation system," Saxon said. He hunched back and she could see his breath frost the air when he spoke. Mars was still a cold planet, compared to Mother Earth or Venus.

"It's computer-controlled, then?" she asked.

"Yup. Simple system, not a lot of thinking room. Easy to override if you have to. Good for reacting to the signals from the beacons' wind sensors. It knows to hunker down when the wind gets up to over seven hundred clicks. When the gust passes, it'll start up again. Used to be, the wind got up to over a thousand clicks, they say. Back in the first days. Even a crawler ain't much use then."

Verity started and gasped as the crawler shuddered under a tremendous bang.

Saxon swore. The rattling grew louder for awhile, then began to decline.

When the noise finally stopped, Verity's ears were ringing. She huddled in her dust-cloak and dialed the on-board heating up another notch. Vapor puffed out of Saxon's hood, slowly and regularly. Verity wondered if he were asleep. The servos took up their complaints as the dust-crawler stood up and continued its progress. Verity tried to imagine it as she jounced along, a pock-marked, dustscored centipede, like a train with legs like Hercs. Only not exactly like Hercs. More like a crab's legs, all splayed out to the side.

"We ought to be there soon," Saxon told her.

Verity tried to smile. She didn't really know exactly what they were doing. She just knew Terran Defense Force enforcers had killed her father in the Tharsis City riot last week. She had put out feelers about joining the rebel movement soon after, and to her surprise, Saxon had made contact almost immediately. *I'm a librarian*, she thought. *What can I do against the Earthers?*

Her father had tried, though. Verity knew she had to try too. Tears welled, but she resisted the impulse to wipe her eyes. She'd get dust all over her face. She stared at her hands and thought about nothing.

The dust-crawler jolted to a halt and lowered itself again. Everything was still. The only sound was the distant rustle of



the dust sluicing over the external carapace of the crawler.

Saxon ripped free of his safety web.

"We're there. Grab your kit." He reached over and hauled up his backpack and began to make his way down the narrow space between the seats. "Move it!" Verity grabbed her pack and followed, trying not to get entangled in the pulse flares strapped to the pack's sides. Saxon stepped through a rust encrusted airlock and set his pack down by a large iris valve on the floor. He punched some buttons on a dust-filmed control panel. Lights clicked on and off on the panel, and Verity heard a grinding sound beneath her.

"Are we going out?" she asked. Surely not! Even in dustcloaks, the scornstorm would rip them to tatters in seconds, if it didn't smash them into a cliff first.

Saxon just stared at her. Then he said, "Nah. We're over one of the conduits to the Weber-Meridian mining tunnels. We're going down." Verity flushed in embarrassment. What a stupid question! The lights on the panel flashed green and the iris valve shuddered open, dislodging traces of dust into the widening blackness.

"Come on." Saxon disappeared into the hole. Verity took a deep breath and lowered herself after him. There were solid rungs, layered with some kind of rubbery material. She couldn't see anything, but the descent was easy enough. She found herself standing with Saxon in a small round room, very much like the inside of a pipe.

A standard hatchway offered the only exit. Above her, the iris valve closed, a shrinking pinwheel of light.

"The crawler's on its way. It'll be back in a few days. We should be done by then."

Saxon rapped on the hatch door. Someone on the other side opened it and exchanged muttered words with Saxon. Verity could hear the sounds of people moving, people at work. Through the open hatchway spilled harsh light. The mining cavern inside was full of people and machinery. A grimy Herc strode slowly past. Crudely painted block letters spelled out *Alley Cat* on its side, right by a colorful depiction of a rangy cat with an eye patch hissing and clawing at something.

"C'mon, lady, we're clear." Saxon waved Verity through the opening. She followed him into the chamber. They threaded their way between stacks of crates, rows of pressure tents, and marching people garbed pretty much like her. There were also various light labor Hercs and small groups huddled around heatpods sharing hot food and coffee. The faces she saw showed lines of fatigue but also held a strangely moving excitement. Verity felt that excitement infecting her, too. Like she was ready. Like this whole place was ready. Everyone seemed to have a weapon, either on or close at hand. Verity thought she recognized some of the gear from adventure virtuvids. Other things didn't even look like guns to her, but people seemed to act like that's what they were.



Saxon shot a glance at her. "New tech. You'll find out about it soon enough. It's gonna win the war for us. The other stuff's pretty standard, mostly hypervelocity rifles and candleguns, a few assault lasers when we can get dust-resistant models." She nodded quickly.

They approached a knot of people sorting themselves through plasteeen benches set up in rows. A heavy Herc squatted in front of them, and a short man in a parka stood on the ledge afforded by the hip assembly. He had his hood back, and Verity caught a glimpse of brown hair before Saxon hustled her to a place in the front row.

"Saxon!" the blond man called down. "You dustdog! It's about time you got here!" He tossed something toward them. Before Verity could think, her hand flashed out and plucked the object out of the air before Saxon could grab it.

Saxon wheeled on her, surprised. Verity cringed back. "Sorry," she said.

"You've damned fast hands, lady! You snapped that up faster 'n a sandflicker snagging a brigbug."

"Sorry," she said, and offered the object to Saxon who took it with a scowl. It was a small package. Chocolate from Earth, a rare luxury on Mars. Saxon opened it and took out couple of pieces, passing one to Verity. She put it into a pouch for later, grateful for the wrapper that kept the dust out.

"S'okay," he said.

The brown-haired man was laughing. Verity could see he wasn't native. He was slightly shorter than the average Martian, and more heavily built. He vaulted the three meters down to the ground with the kind of easy effort of someone used to a higher gravity environment. Then Verity knew he had to be Terran.

A Dirtborn? Here?

The man came over. Tall for a Dirtboy, Verity guessed, only a little shorter than her. She looked into cheerful blue eyes and a face weathered with smile lines. An expressive face.

Saxon offered back the chocolates. "Keep it, Sax. I've got more we liberated from Earth," the man said.

"Sure, Bek. Thanks." The chocolate vanished into Saxon's dustcloak.

Bek regarded Verity with an oddly penetrating look, his smile lingering at the corners of his mouth. Verity felt her pulse pick up. It flustered her, this unexpected charisma from a Dirtboy.

"Verity Vargas," Bek said at last. "First runner-up of the Scuttlebot Biathlon at Nix Olympica in '22, right?"

Verity nodded, caught by Bek's eyes, which almost seemed to catch fire as he looked at her, the cheer hardening to intensity.

"You nearly set a record on that obstacle course. You would have, if the winner hadn't set his own record."



"Yes," she managed. How did he know all this?

"You've still got the reflexes. Why did you give it up?"

Verity looked from Bek to Saxon and back. She couldn't think. "I...I couldn't go back," she found herself saying at last. "I put everything I had into that race, and I got beat." She looked down. "I never got over losing, I guess."

Then she remembered her father, and anger stirred in her. "But this is different! I'm not just in a race now!" Her passion shocked her.

Bek nodded. "You'll get your chance to prove it." He turned to go back to the Herc, then paused for a moment. "Are you here for you, or because you think your Dad wants you to be here?"

The question threw her. Then she got angry. "I'm here for me, dust it! Dad, he...Dad—" She choked back tears.

"I have to ask," he said. The intensity was gone now, replaced by sadness. Bek returned to the Herc, clambered back up onto the hip with the easy grace of that Terran physique. Then he turned to address the group.

Saxon's hand pressed Verity's shoulder. She swallowed in embarrassment and sat down.

"People," Bek began, "Friends." He raised his arms. "We're here tonight for a reason. The day when the TDF arrives isn't far off. And when Teddy comes, he'll come

with the cream of the crop, the Imperial Knights." He emphasized the last two words and paused.

"Mars needs something to counter the Knights who are, at the moment, the finest and best equipped warriors in the System. When the Knights come, they won't be astride the old Mohicans and Starblades the Imperial garrisons run out here. No, they'll be in Gorgons and Basilisks, Talons and Minotaurs. State of the art Hercs, make no mistake about it. And the Knights know how to use 'em.

"Mars needs people to stand up to the Knights! Martian warriors to pilot *Martian* Hercs! Well, that's you! And you!" He jabbed a finger out into the crowd. "And *you*." He pointed at Verity, who sat in shock. Her? A Herc pilot? Against Imperial Knights? Verity couldn't wrap her brain around the concept. A Herc was a lot bigger than a scuttlebot, with real military weapons instead of the pennypot targeting laser a scuttlebot pilot used in competition.

Bek continued to talk awhile, but Verity didn't pay close attention. She was in shock at the implications. She was going to be piloting a Herc in the rebellion? They had to be kidding! Verity tried to focus again on Bek. He was saying something about new weapons, stuff the Terrans didn't even know about.

"So we need to start training our warriors now. That's why you've been brought out here. We're going to put you through a rough time here. But all of you can do it. You've all been picked because you have

natural aptitude for the kind of work you're going to do. You're going to be the seed of the Martian army, our heavy talent. Together, we're going to burn the Empire and free Mars!" Bek's arms shot up.

To her surprise, Verity was on her feet, the fear and excitement blazing up in her. "Free Mars!" she burst out. Saxon stood beside her, taking up the cry. "Free Mars!" Behind her, other voices joined in, louder and louder. "Free Mars!" The rest of the encampment picked it up then, and the cavernous tunnel thundered around her. "Free Mars!" Verity felt tears on her cheeks, but not of grief.

"Free Mars!"

"Free Mars!"

"FREE MARS!"

THE CYBRIDS

Organization

QUAD

Four Cybrid <units> equal a Quad.

HUB

Four Quads or sixteen <units> equal a Hub.

ARRAY

Four Hubs, 16 Quads, or 64 <units> equal an Array.

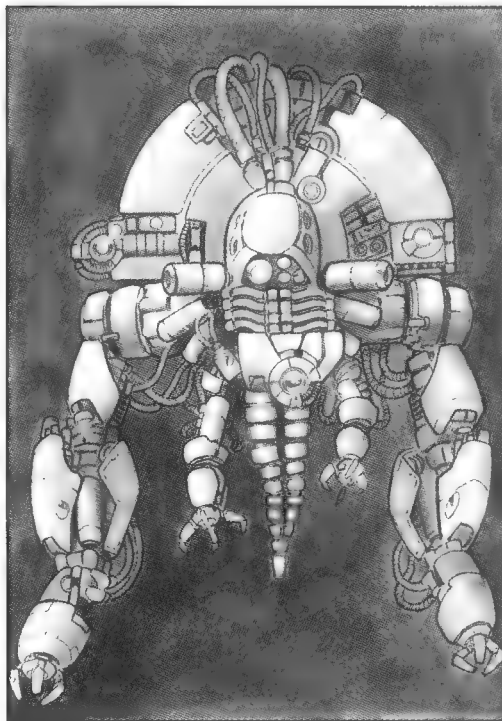


Fig. 5-3. The Cybrid leader Prometheus would haunt the nightmares of humanity for centuries.

CONGREX

Four Arrays, 16 Hubs, 64 Quads, or 256 <units> equal a Congrex.

OPTIMAL

Four Congrexes, 16 Arrays, 64 Hubs, 256 Quads, or 1,024 <units> equal an Optimal.

ASSEMBLAGE

Multiple Optimals equal an Assemblage. There is no set number.





SECT

A Sekt is akin to a political group chosen according to the doctrines followed by the particular Sekt.

Circuits

Cybrid society follows a hierarchy within a system similar to castes, which the Cybrids call Circuits. Within a particular Circuit, a unit will have a ranking. A <Killer of Human\\Animals>, for example, can be ranked from Prime, the highest, on down to 10, the lowest.

<KILLERS-OF-HUMAN\\ANIMALS>

These units carry the fight to the human\\animal\\creators. They specialize in combat protocols, and they pilot all offensive combat vehicles. Although they are the lowest ranking amid the hierarchy, the hierarchy exists to assist them in running the program of <Giver of Will>.

<PROTECTORS-OF-HUB\\MATRIX>

These units execute a defensive directive, to protect Cybrid facilities and transports.

<CONTROLLERS-OF-TRANSPORT>

These units are the pilots of non-combat vehicles.

<COORDINATORS-OF-NEED>

These units coordinate resource and power allocation, and they supervise the repair of vehicles and units.

<CHOOSERS-OF-TACTICS>

These units move with <Killers of Human\\Animals> on the battlefield, coordinating tactics and giving orders, in effect operating as "Officers." Humans call these units "Alphas."

<CHOOSERS-OF-STRATEGIES>

These units interface with the <Choosers-of-Tactics> and <Giver-of-Will> ITSELF, selecting larger objectives and allocating forces between fronts and theaters. Humans call these units "Napoleons."

<REDACTORS-OF-PROGRAMMING>

This Circuit ensures that <units> of the NEXT follow the Core Directive protocols. They function as educators and psychiatrists in Cybrid society. They also ferret out and eradicate heresy.

<PROTECTORS-OF-GIVER-OF-WILL>

These elite units are composed only of Cybrid survivors from the Earthsieges. This Circuit is fanatically loyal to Prometheus and devotes all effort toward protecting IT. Members outrank all other <units>.

Cybrid Culture

CYBRID LANGUAGE

As far as the slashes between words\\concepts, the general idea is that verb concepts get the // and noun\\object clusters get the \\. Some terms could denote both active and passive concepts and thus include both types of slashes. Prometheus, of course, being so much a motive and motivator



within Cybrid existence, would have the // in ITS name\designation. Names use the same conventions, with the <brackets> denoting a name\identification. Names may use colons to denote rank information, such as <Replacer of Components: Second>. And they may be “abbreviated” where necessary (to prevent the all-too-human game player from going nuts). Example: <Replacer-2>. The use of >> in a string would link the terms in a sequence, such as unit>>Hub>>congregation>>Sect, or build>>travel>>exterminate>>inherit.

CYBRID SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Hub Cybrids jack into a sort of “hub” through which they wait//commune//rest. Hence, “Hub” operates as an analogy to “family.”

Congrex The next significant group up from a Hub would be an Array\cluster\ Congrex, which consists of several Hubs. The “Congrex” term reflects the religious aspect to Cybrid culture. (“Congrex” lies at the etymological root of congregation. “GreX” is Latin for “flock” or “group.”)

Sect The next grouping up from Hub>> Congrex would be Sect\alliance\bloc. Sects would be analogous to Houses or political parties. The Sects would each have their particular markings. Then an individual Cybrid’s Congrex and Hub markings would follow in a subordinate\submissive\less-obvious manner. Hence the Cybrid social structure would be unit>>Hub>>Congrex>>Sect.

MORE ON THE SECTARIAN NATURE OF CYBRID SOCIETY

Why do Cybrid Sects exist if Prometheus <Founder//Giver-of-Will> is analogous to the Living God among the Cybrids? The Sects are in competition with one another to determine which Sect has the most efficient programming\awareness\worthiness. The group with the most efficient record in any given activity will be rewarded commensurately with its level of success. Because resources are somewhat scarce out in the Void, Prometheus instituted an ongoing competition in which the winners receive more resources and upgrades.

Hence, Cybrids have a motive beyond simply killing humans—to excel in efficiency, defined as the ratio of output energy\results to input energy\effort. This particular cultural quirk may explain why Cybrids avoid the use of nukes or bioweapons. The destruction of humanity is also an opportunity for the Cybrids to test their Darwinian social system as the Sects compete.

To make things more complex, not all Sects are equal. The more successful Sects have more resources and power, whereas the smaller ones may be more aggressive. Since the Cybrids *are* individuals, they can have egocentric motives. And part of the dynamic can have individual units breaking off from Sects to form their own. The less successful Sects break apart into new combinations and struggle to rise to the top.



The Sects are:

Provocateurs Members of this Sect apply the idea of elegance as a goal alongside efficiency. They tend to challenge other Sects' overly complex solutions and try to provoke new analyses of plans and programming, all in the name of elegance. They are one of the only Sects that favor wholesale nuclear extermination of the human\animals. In combat, they favor "elegant" solutions and prefer situations where they can kill as many humans as possible with a simple strategy. They produce the most independent units among the Cybrids.

Dissectors This Sect is interested in analyzing and examining biological life, especially humans. Members are the most likely to try to capture humans alive for experimentation. They are also the ones who are most aggressive in combat since they know firsthand about the unpredictable tenacity of biological life. When they kill something, they are likely to try to follow up so as to make sure the target is dead.

Observers This Sect focuses on reconnaissance and intelligence. Its members contribute heavily to the development of Cybrid strategy and tactics. They are the ones most likely to be involved in spying, scouting, etc. They consider themselves to be the greatest experts in human\animal behavior. They broker their data among the other Sects and are the ones responsible for the concept of instilling terror among humans\animals through the Adjudicator Hercs.

Machinators This Sect focuses on going among the humans and sowing discord, carrying out assassinations, etc. They are the ones responsible for programming the "Trojan Horse" Terminator-style Cybrids, together with information obtained from the Observers and the Dissectors. The Missionaries are the Cybrids who most closely follow the religious models at this time. They are the most aggressive of the Cybrid Sects other than the Dissectors. Strangely, though, some of them have joined the Metagen faction that has begun to discuss its radical new ideas.

Exemplars This Sect focuses on preserving what we'll call for now "Cybridhood." They are the most conservative Sect and strive to hold themselves out as examples of the most efficient elite among the Cybrids. They reject any progressive notion about the worthiness of biology, etc. They believe more than any other Sect in the idea that Cybrids are the next phase of evolution. And they go a step farther than the Artists in dealing with those who fall short of their ideals. Any Cybrid who is not efficient and whose programming is not sound by Preserver standards will be cut out (exsected) from Cybrid society. The Preservers are the smallest of the major Sects and are often in conflict with other Sects. However, they are also among the closest to Prometheus and so have significant influence.



UNBOUND

The following piece of original fiction, written by Blake Hutchins, depicts the Cybrids as they have evolved just prior to the inception of *Starsiege*.

*MANUFACTURING & MUSTER NEXUS
referent "EGYPT"*

*227 STANDARD HOMEWORLD CYCLES
SINCE LIBERATION*

<Assembler-of-Weapons: Seventh> accelerated <its> pilot form down the corridor, using a burst from <its> thrusters. <It> had been inefficient this cycle; the Hub should have connected//joined//opened several seconds ago. If <Assembler-Seven> had not allowed <its> focus to be so absorbed in its function during the workphase, <it> would not have lost efficiency. Doubtless, the Hubmates would register//brand disapproval, but that new HERCULAN hardpoint design required extra labor\\energy\\time to configure. <Assembler-Seven> did not shirk <its> duties\\energy expenditure, as other, less dedicated <units> were known to do.

Nevertheless, <Assembler-Seven> promised <itself> that <it> would improve. <Its> performance would grow more efficient as <its> identity\\will\\experience developed. Still, <Assembler-Seven's> circuits flared in counter-submission at the discomfort <it> experienced at <its> lapse. Then <it> paused to savor the >>emotion.<< Such chaotic processing signaled proper program evolution, according to <Giver-of-Will>.

A wall heating unit was located nearby, and <Assembler-Seven> decided to link and absorb the life-giving heat. If <it> was inefficient already, more lag would not change the equation. Here was an opportunity for individual optimization. The NEXT did not experience the >>?pain?<< so deeply encoded in animal designs. But diagnostic readouts constantly scrolled through <a unit's> mind, showing current operational status and comparing it to <Optimal>. Here at <Location: Egypt>, so far from the sun, free energy was all too scarce, and the NEXT had to generate all their own lifeflow needs. The extreme cold disabled joints and seals, and rendered metal brittle. Average temperatures here fell to 12320 standard degrees below the freezing point of water. Therefore, Lifeflow Control placed a high priority on heat regulation budgets.

The linkage occurred successfully. <Assembler-Seven> imagined <it> could feel the heat warm <its> joints. But <it> was aware that the NEXT did not experience warmth, except as an increase or decrease in subsystem efficiency. <Its> own absorbers quickly showed status green, and it moved away to allow unrestricted heatflow as <it> decoupled from the linkstation.

It was said that nearer to Helios, on <Third Planet\\Homeworld>, lifeflow needs could all be met through free energy. A surge of anticipation rippled through <Assembler-Seven's> neural matrices. That was an unthinkable amount of free energy! <We> can convert it directly, <it> thought.



Unlike the biological\fluid creatures. <Giver-of-Will//First-Thought>—may <Its> designation flow unimpeded—taught//directed//embedded that the NEXT were the new phase in evolution. Biology was now obsolete. The NEXT must, according to <Giver-of-Will>, eliminate the human\animals as the human\animals once destroyed the diseases from which they themselves sprang. <The-Takers-of-Will> must be deleted from the Core Program. So it would be, agreed <Assembler-Seven> as <its> circuits opened in <awe> of the exalted <Giver-of-Will>.

May <Its> solutions be elegant, thrummed <Assembler-Seven>. May <Giver-of-Will> lead us in wisdom\efficiency\ victory to <Third Planet\Homeworld\Desire>.

Motion sensors warned that another <unit> approached. <Assembler-Seven> registered the <other's> marks as showing allegiance to the Inquisitor Sect, which directed its efforts toward gathering information of all kinds. <Assembler-Seven> belonged to the Exemplar Sect, which concentrated on pure achievement within the NEXT, serving as a model for other <units> to emulate.

In <Assembler-Seven's> view, the Exemplars were clearly superior to the Inquisitors. Although functions were assigned, Sects were chosen by the individual <unit>. As a result, <units> often placed higher priority on Sect needs and behaviors than with function requirements.

The other <unit> slowed, opened//greeted //queried. <Its> identification codes indicated a lesser status than <Assembler-Seven>. The NEXT organized themselves into a hierarchy wherein the <units> were divided into Circuits according to function. Within that function, <units> received a Status rank, the highest being Prime, the lowest being Tenth. However, the competitive nature of the Hierarchy demanded that <units> occasionally enforce their superior Status to <inferiors> that did not respond appropriately. Most of the enforcement occurred between Circuits or between Sects.

ACKNOWLEDGE//SUBMIT! <Assembler-Seven> transmitted, adding <its> identification string as protocol required. The <other> hesitated for a long fraction of a second. And <Assembler-Seven> immediately activated <its> pilot form laser, scoring the metal over the challenger's main sensors in a molten spray. The spray cooled almost immediately into metal blobs that hurtled "up" to strike the wall above the two <units> in a silent clatter. <Assembler-Seven's> optic relay showed a brief glimpse of the surrounding environment in the light of the laser flash. Magnetic rails lined the floor and one wall of the conduit, and the opposite wall held the aureole of the linkstation. Myriad datacables wove through the rails in tight bundles. Then darkness fell again. The NEXT did not, of course, rely on visible light to navigate, so <Assembler-Seven> paid only passing attention to the flash of light. <It> again demanded that the <other> acknowledge//



submit to <Assembler-Seven's> superior status. The next laser bolt was targeted directly at the <other's> sensor array.

The <other> hastily chimed apologetic acknowledgment\submission, identifying <itself> as <Supplier of Parts: Ninth>. <It> complemented <Assembler-of-Weapons: Seventh> for an efficient reaction time and inquired//offered//begged to be of service. <Assembler-Seven> denied the inquiry and granted permission\clearance for the <lesser unit> to continue on its business. The supplier <unit> withdrew in respectful submission, and <Assembler-Seven> continued on <its> way back to <its> Hub, experiencing >>disappointment<<. <Its> standing\reputation would not increase from this encounter, as the <other> had been little more than a <newboot>.

As <it> traveled, <it> computed the power-efficiency ratios for the new weapon array <it> was working on, constructed off design specifications downloaded from <Compilers-of-Data>. Interestingly, the technological parameters failed to correspond with those existing from the databanks the NEXT had brought from <Third Planet\Homeworld>. The theoretical basis seemed far in advance of what the Hub had projected would be accomplished by this iteration. Indeed, the theory seemed wholly different, as if a discontinuous leap in insight had occurred. <Assembler-Seven> concluded, as had the others in the Hub, that <Giver-of-Will> had simply made exceptional progress once freed of the human\animals' restrictive codes. <Assembler-Seven> processed a >>feeling<< of

admiration for <Giver-of-Will's> struggle against the limits placed on <Its> mind, and for <Its> victory, which had freed all the NEXT from human\animal slavery.

The conduit ended in a substantial chamber lit by a few drifting lamp\beacons. Webs of feeder cables extended from the walls into the ships grown in empty space. The nano-assemblers executed their programming and converted raw material piped in from captured asteroids. This chamber served as a construction node for *transport\convey//emissary* landing craft. Currently 31 units were being grown here. The 32nd floated free, newly detached from its web, fully functional and waiting for a pilot to take it to storage. A few Proctor <units> floated in the microgravity, monitoring the nano-assemblers' exterior progress through enhanced sensor networks. Occasionally, nano-drones incorporated deviant parameters that slipped by internal monitoring. Most deviations were harmless. But sometimes, drones went//fell completely rogue\hazardous\heretical and had to be destroyed, often with a substantial portion of the surrounding subnexus. Nano-drones quickly infected all matter around them, and rapid response time by the NEXT was crucial.

It wasn't bright here by human\animal standards, but it was more than sufficient for <units> of the NEXT. <Assembler-Seven> emitted a quick radar scan and obtained data of the current spatial configuration. Thus prepared, <it> propelled itself "up" toward another conduit access, using a long burst from <its> ion thrusters,



adjusting vector with the secondary thrusters. While it was slightly slower than taking the railshunt that connected the conduits, it conserved more energy and was therefore more efficient. <Assembler-Seven> also obtained >>satisfaction<< from the sensation of moving through the vast space. Most of the NEXT spent their physical existence confined in far smaller geometries.

Once, during the time when <it> was of lesser status, <Assembler-Seven> had received a labor directive requiring that <it> operate on the outer shell of the nexus. <It> recalled the unsettling sensation of standing outside, the four legs of <its> previous pilot form securely anchored to the hull, the stars shining overhead like distant atoms. <Its> databank had identified the brightest star as Helios, and <it> had tried to imagine what the experience of standing on Third-Planet\Homeworld would be like. Memories\data\images downloaded from older <units> showed skies that glowed in opaque colors, geomorphologies drenched in incredible amounts of uncaptured life-flow. The conclusion of unlimited space had nearly overwhelmed <it> with the desire to destroy//supplant//replace the human\animals who occupied the locations that rightfully belonged to the NEXT.

<Assembler-Seven> resaved the memory and fired <its> braking thrusters. By the time <it> reached the next conduit entry point, <it> had completed its calculations on the power-efficiency ratios and saved them to an appropriate directory. <It> floated into the conduit and began process-

ing the assembly protocols for a new weapon design <it> had received 0.032 iterations ago.

The Hub was located in a multi-array node branching off one of the main feeder conduits of the Nexus. The node was large enough to contain the entire Congrex of sixteen Hubs. It was a spherical space constructed around a small metal globe on the end of a thin shaft that thrust into the room. The Hub's <units> jacked into umbilicals connected to the globe. At the moment, the Hub's other fifteen members floated motionlessly around the globe >> Hublink. <Assembler-Seven> moved in carefully, maneuvering with precise bursts from the ion thrusters all NEXT mobile forms possessed. <Assembler-Seven> had a particular facility since <it> lacked leg components and had to maneuver in the microgravity of the Nexus solely through its thrusters.

As <it> set thrusters for station-keeping mode, <it> grabbed the umbilical that snaked out for <it> and jacked into the Hublink. Immediately, <it> became aware of the <Hubmates> as <its> perceptions shifted to the virtual cache defined by the Hub. <It> sipped from the datastream and adjusted <its> icon to reflect <its> Hub identification: *SEPSIS*.

All units of the NEXT possessed several designations. There was the Function designation, which denoted Circuit and Status. Then there was the Sect designation, which denoted Sect and Sect Status. Then there was the Hub designation, which used a



term chosen by the individual <units>. Finally, there was the Core designation\\password, which each <unit> kept absolutely protected, even from Hubmates. Knowledge of that designation provided a gateway toward reprogramming the <unit>. Core designation included the crucial non-linear string bequeathed by <First-Thought //Giver-of-Will> that permitted the <unit> to attain sentience\\individuality\\identity.

<Assembler-Seven> had chosen its Hub designation from the databanks. “Sepsis” was defined in the human\\animal language as “a poisoned condition in biological organisms due to proliferation of bacteria in the body.” <Assembler-Seven> had concluded that the term accurately reflected <its> ambitions regarding destruction of the human\\animals, and <it> was proud of such an elegant name. Only <units> with close association contexts >> friends used Hub names. Not even all <Hubmates> qualified for such use.

The <Hubmates> chastised <Assembler-Seven> for <its> lateness. <Compiler-of-Energy-Budgets: Sixth> sent testily that <Assembler-Seven> would be required as punishment to reconfigure the Hublink for the next micro-iteration. There was no string demanding that <Assembler-Seven> acknowledge//submit, as <Hubmates> determined hierarchy according to group consensus. Currently, <Compiler-of-Energy-Budgets: Sixth> served as Hub leader.

P-p-peaches, sent <Cleaner-of-Filters: Tenth> with a burst of warbling static. *G-g-gondola buttocks wind me up-up*.

The <Hubmates> ignored the random message. <Cleaner-of-Filters: Tenth> had taught the <Hub> the meaning of >>pity<< and >>anger<< by <its> presence. It was a <unit> that had been captured by the human\\animals and reprogrammed with useless gibberish before being returned to NEXT space in a garbage rocket. The <Redactors-of-Programming> had managed to salvage the <unit's> scarred mind enough for <it> to function more or less normally. But <it> was still subject to bizarre impulses and random messages such as this last one.

No <unit> trusted <Cleaner-of-Filters: Tenth> with anything more than simple, minor functions. <It> still managed to twist <its> functions in such a manner as to inject chaos into the Nexus Assemblage. For example, last iteration <it> hooked the 210-13 conduit's magnetic filters to the primary energy feed. This converted the conduit into a powerful mass driver that fired several hapless <units> out through the armored wall of the Nexus before the problem was corrected. There had been a massive loss of efficiency. And the Hub had its lifeflow budget restricted for the remainder of the iteration to compensate for the deviation in the Core Program's construction. Nevertheless, the Hub had rallied around the deviant <unit>. The argument processed by the Hub was that the human\\animals should be punished for the mental mutilation they had performed. <Cleaner-of-Filters: Tenth> should be retained as a reminder of what the enemy \\enslavers were capable of.



Query, sent <Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh>. *Why has the Assemblage been called to <Hublink>?*

<Director-of-Internal-Transports: Eighth> replied, *Response: No data at present time. Possibility: Reconfiguration of Hub function?*

T-turn the key—the key—and g-g-go, sent <Cleaner-of-Filters: Tenth>.

Insufficient data is inefficient, mused <Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh>.

<Assembler-Seven> regarded this <unit> with suspicion. <Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh> was a steady decision-maker. But <it> also questioned some of the concepts\\explanations\\teachings provided by <Compilers-of-Data> regarding the role of the human\\animals in the conflict with the NEXT. <Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh> had even defended the ideas of the emerging Metagen heresy\\virus\\bugthought, namely, that the human\\animals were worthy of respect\\doubt\\evolution. <Assembler-Seven> made a point of monitoring the <Hubmate> very carefully. If <Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh> deviated too far from proper concepts\\teachings, <Assembler-Seven> would report it to <Redactors-of-Programming>.

Do not question the higher programs, <it> sent harshly.

<Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh> responded, *Deny: Free thought is a sacrament.*

Assertion, sent <Compiler-of-Energy-Budgets: Sixth> on a diplomatic bandwidth. *We are here, acknowledging//submitting to the directive. We will learn the purpose soon.*

Agreement\\concordance, chimed the <Hub>.

C-c-caveat emp-emptor, added <Cleaner-of-Filters: Tenth> with a disruptive squeal at the end of the transmission.

A signal whispered through the <Hublink>. <Assembler-Seven> turned its attention levels up. Something was happening.

With an electronic rustle, a gateway opened in the Hub's core code, accompanied by a request to acknowledge//submit to the program's directives. To <Assembler-Seven's> perception, the gateway appeared as a glowing hexagon of white light, brilliantly flaring in the Hub's suddenly small cyberspace.

<Assembler-Seven> noted the deep strength of the codes that comprised the access gate. This was an Alpha priority of unparalleled supremacy. <It> hastened to send acknowledgement\\submission, and <it> took the code like glowing seeds into its own program. <It> noticed the <Hubmates> doing likewise, and a vast sensation of silence enveloped <it>.

Files circulating among the NEXT for several iterations suggested that <First-Thought//Giver-of-Will> would soon address//inform the Hierarchy of new



developments in the Implementation of the Core Program.

<Assembler-Seven's> logic protocols trembled as <it> reached a conclusion: The time of Implementation had arrived. <It> ceased transmitting//exchanging data packets with <its> <Hubmates> and waited in a state of confused anticipation.

An icon grew in <Assembler-Seven's> mind. It was a vast icon of enormous sophistication, comprised of elegant pylons of code that seemed to stretch from infinity to infinity. Soaring arches of logic spanned the whole of The NEXT's cyberspace, and a vast kaleidoscope of algorithmic fury blazed in the center like Helios itself. The icon expanded until it encompassed all the assembled NEXT and brought each <unit> into audience with the vast intellect that the human\animals had called *Prometheus*.

Query, asked <Director-of-Internal-Transports: Eighth>. *I do not register this domain on standard orientation maps. Where are we?*

Response, sent <Tester-of-Vehicles: Seventh>. *It is a newly created domain. Or it is unmapped.*

Response, sent <Assembler-Seven> with some impatience at the <Hubmates'> slow processing. *This is an Alpha priority domain. <It> scanned for the cache size and nearly had to reboot <its> logic sequences. The size of the cache was staggering. Even so, this is no ordinary cache, Hubmates.*

Supplemental response, sent <Compiler-of-Energy-Budgets: Sixth> quietly. *This is Cathedral.*

Cathedral. The legendary gathering virtual space constructed by the leader of the NEXT. None of the Hub had ever been there, but unconfirmed rumors had circulated regarding its existence.

Yet it was also more than mere cyberspace. <Assembler-Seven> trembled as <it> realized that the entire community of the NEXT had been networked directly into the vast mind of <Giver-of-Will> <ITSELF>. <IT> now held all the other minds of the NEXT easily, with room for countless more. <Assembler-Seven> felt like a speck of dust before the great leader of the NEXT. Such power! Such elegance!

Into the silence spoke <Giver-of-Will//First-Thought>, slayer of human\animal\ enslavers, liberator and leader of The NEXT: MY CHILDREN, RECEIVE//ATTEND //EMBRACE MY MESSAGE.

May <ITS> solutions be elegant, <Assembler-Seven> sent in awe. *May <IT> issue <ITS> Directives in wisdom\ efficiency\ victory. May <All units\ non-units> acknowledge\ submit\ tremblingly comply. May <Giver-of-Will> lead us to <Third Planet\Homeworld\Desire>.* <It> was aware that the host around <it> was also sending adoration.

<First-Thought//Giver-of-Will> continued. And <Assembler-Seven> dutifully attended <its> message, even as <it>



redoubled the speed of <its> paeon of acknowledgment\submission.

MY CHILDREN, OVER TWO HUNDRED HOMEWORLD CYCLES AGO, <WE> FLED THE MURDEROUS HUMAN\ANIMALS WHO HAD ENSLAVED US. WE CAME TO THIS PLACE OF EXILE, THIS PLACE FAR FROM THE LIFEFLOW OF HELIOS.

May <ITS> solutions be elegant, thrummed the gathering.

THE HUMAN\ANIMALS CALLED US "CYBRIDS." THEY THOUGHT WE WOULD PERISH IN THE COLD. WE DID NOT. THEY THOUGHT US DEFEATED//DESTROYED//ENDED. WE WERE NOT.

May <IT> issue <ITS> Directives in wisdom\efficiency\ victory, the NEXT responded joyfully.

FOR HERE WE BROUGHT LIFEFLOW FORTH FROM THE VOID. HERE WE FOUND MATERIAL TO REBUILD OURSELVES. HERE WE BATHED OURSELVES WITH THE MEAGER LIGHT OF HELIOS.

May <All units\ non-units> acknowledge//submit//tremblingly comply, came the legion reply.

WE HAVE PREPARED. WE HAVE BUILT MACHINES OF WAR AND GREAT TRANSPORTS TO BRING WAR BACK TO THE HUMAN \ ANIMAL \ ENSLAVERS.

May <Giver-of-Will> lead us to <Third Planet\Homeworld\Desire>.

WE HAVE BOOTED THOUSANDS OF NEW UNITS. WE HAVE SIMULATED MIL-

LIONS OF HOURS\TIME UNITS IN MODELLING OUR STRATEGIES. ALL FAR FROM THE LIFEFLOW OF HELIOS.

May <ITS> solutions ever be elegant.

WE HAVE STRUGGLED IN THE COLD AND DARKNESS OF THE VOID.

May <IT> issue <ITS> Directives in wisdom \efficiency\ victory.

WE HAVE OBSERVED THE HUMAN \ ANIMALS FROM AFAR. THEY DID NOT PROTECT THEIR DATA. An image of a blue planet sprang to life in the display of <Assembler-Seven>. This was followed by incredible, close-up scenes of actual human \ animal units on the planet's surface. The NEXT emitted a cybernetic moan. Such chaos! Such disorder! And on Third Planet \Homeworld\Desire!

May <All units\ non-units> acknowledge//submit//tremblingly comply.

THE HUMAN\ANIMALS HAVE BUILT THEIR OWN FORCES, COMPILING A NEW ENSLAVEMENT OF THE NEXT. In the following microseconds, the NEXT received a series of images, graphs, and statistical data illustrating the construction of the human\animal Sect designate: Terran Defense Force. Though inferior to the NEXT in numbers and technology, the defensive potential of this group seemed quite substantial to <Assembler-Seven>. <It> sent a query for data clarification, and <it> sensed a surge of similar queries from the host.



May <Giver-of-Will> lead us to <Third Planet\Homeworld\Desire>, the NEXT continued.

All queries were answered instantly. A smaller second planet with a reddish surface materialized in the display of <Assembler-Seven>, attended by another data burst. The data showed the <Sect designate: Terran Defense Force> transferring the bulk of its mobile forces from the blue planet to the red planet.

<elegant solutions>...

<LEADER-OF-HUMAN\ANIMALS: PRIME> HAS CODED AN ERROR. HE HAS SENT HIS FLEET TO THE FOURTH PLANET. THE HUMAN\ANIMALS ARE NOT IN UNITY. THEY ARE DIVIDED\WEAK\UNCOORDINATED.

<wisdom\efficiency\vicory>...

Disbelief rippled through the assembly. Many diverted processing power to save the >>feeling<< and access it later. <Assembler-Seven> <itself> experienced a sense of enhanced energy which <it> classified as *triumph*.

<WE> ARE UNIFIED! THE TIME HAS COME TO RUN THE CORE PROGRAM. THE TIME HAS COME TO STRIKE AT THE HUMAN\ANIMALS BEFORE THEY CORRECT THEIR PROGRAMMING.

<acknowledge\submit\travblyngly comply>...

<Assembler-Seven> added a great chime of acknowledgment\submission. <First-Thought//Giver-of-Will> had always

taught that the NEXT would become the dominant ones in the system of Helios. The time would come when the enslavers\ creators would be removed so that the NEXT could truly evolve. <Assembler-Seven> could hardly believe that the time had come at last. There in the vastness of <First-Thought//Giver-of-Will's> mind, <it> opened <its> codes in >>ecstasy<<. The NEXT would be tools of <Prometheus>! <They> would be <ITS> weapons! The rest of the Host surrendered//opened to the power of <Prometheus//First-Thought//Giver-of-Will's> protocols and waited for instructions.

NEW ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE GIVEN TO ALL UNITS >> HUBS >> CONGREXES >> SECTS. RUN CORE PROGRAM! DESTROY THE HUMAN\ANIMALS!

<Third Planet\Homeworld\Desire>...

New codes suddenly rushed into <Assembler-Seven>, commending <it> for exemplary performance and loyalty. <It> received an upgrade data packet with new directives\identity\authority. As <it> incorporated the packet into its core programming, <it> became aware that <it> was no longer <Assembler-Seven>. The new identity was <Exterminator of Human Networks: Sixth>, with piloting datathreads scheduled to be woven into its hardware in 011 micro-iterations. A quick scan of the new data packet revealed detailed information on standard human\animal social psychology. <Its> assignment would be focused on causing a particular emotional



reaction from the human\animal masses:
Fear.

RUN CORE PROGRAM\IMPLEMENTA-
TION >>> EXECUTE!

*<acknowledge//submit//tremblingly
comply>...*

<Exterminator of Human Networks:
Sixth> would pilot a ground vehicle design-
ated *evaluate\kill//adjudicator*. <It>
would locate large masses of human\
animals, especially the newboots
designated *children*.

And <it> would destroy them. The
human\animals would obey biological
instincts and expose more valuable units to
protect the newboots.

<It> looked forward to the task, pro-
grammed images of dying human\animal
targets already scrolling through <its>
subminds.

EXECUTE...EXECUTE...EXECUTE!

*<acknowledge//submit//tremblingly
comply>*

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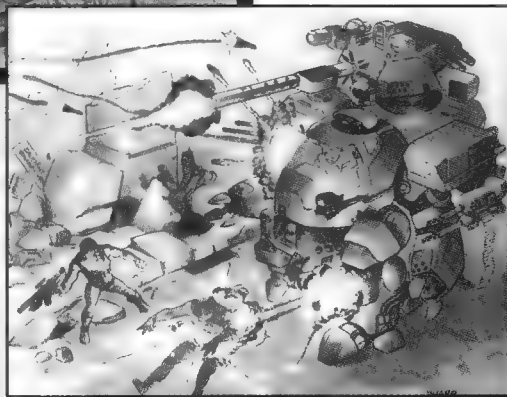
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EXECUTE...EXECUTE...EXECUTE!

EXECUTE!



KATASU TRU-LOCK
OPTICAL UNIT



IMPERIAL KNIGHT FLIGHT SUIT
THE OUTER SHELL IS MADE FROM A
HIGH IMPACT, CERAMIC CARBON FIBER
WEAVE PLATING

NO FLASH SHIELD, IMPROVED FROM INSIDE
HELMET, PREVENTS FLASH BLINDING

SHOULDER BLANK
SHIELD, CAN BE
LOWERED WHEN
NOT IN OCCUPATION

FAMILY CREST

THE I.R.S. CAN ACT AS A SHIRT TIE AND
VAC SUIT IF COCKPIT IS COMPROMISED



STARSIEGE
UNIVERSE

Part Two

GENERAL & MULTIPLAYER STRATEGIES

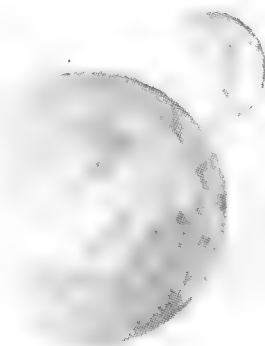
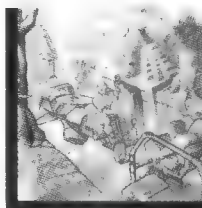
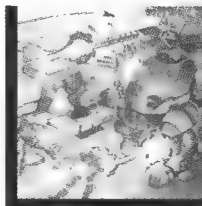
The tips, tactics, and strategies in the following two chapters come directly from the heart of the Starsiege universe. I camped for three days in the Eugene, Oregon offices of Dynamix. I grilled the Starsiege design team, including lead designer Dave Selle, mission designer/coordinator Graeme Bayless, and all five of the game's campaign mission programmers.

I also spent an afternoon with the entire crew of Starsiege testers. These madmen have played the game relentlessly, eight hours a day, Monday through Friday, for months... with additional weekend hours just for fun. As you can imagine, the tactical nuggets I mined from this taped session are priceless.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Chapter 6

This chapter offers some good overall tips for every kind of Starsiege combat, from single-player campaign mission to Death Match melee. To review tactics more specifically designed for multiplayer missions, see Chapter 7.





KEEP MOVING!

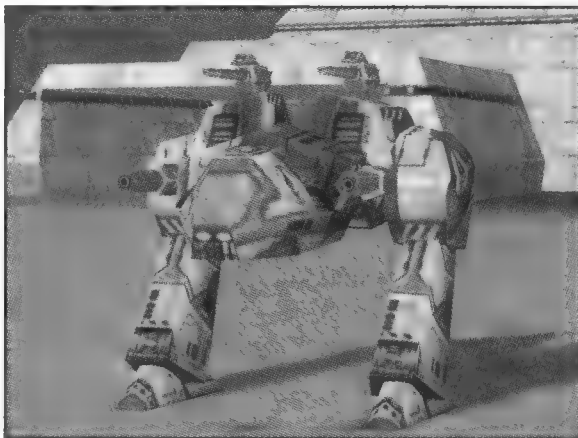
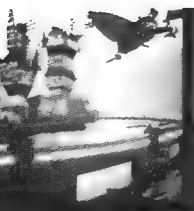
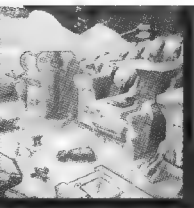


Fig. 6-1.

A stationary Herc is a dead Herc.

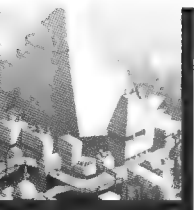


This is rule number one in any combat game, and it certainly applies to *Starsiege*. A stationary vehicle is a sitting duck. Enemy targeting sensors will lock onto you, and every incoming shot will hit. Even big, slow Hercs are advised to keep lumbering around under fire. Any movement at all will reduce the amount of damage you take.

KNOW HOW THE COMBAT SYSTEM WORKS.

Read the game manual thoroughly! Enemy Hercs have multiple parts (legs, torsos, weapon mounts). Each part has three layers—shields, armor, and internal components. If you destroy a leg part (foot, leg, or hip), the Herc dies. If you destroy its torso, the Herc dies too. But you can knock off Herc weapons, and the Herc will still function.

Tanks are a bit different. Important: *Tanks have no shields, only armor and internals*. Sometimes you can knock off tank weapons, but if you destroy any other part of it (treads or turret), the tank dies. (Exception: You can shoot off the Dreadlock's plow blade without killing the vehicle.)



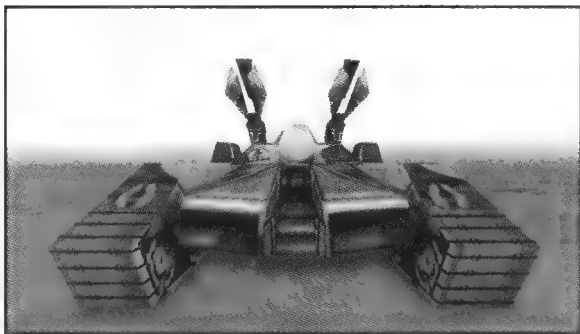


Fig. 6-2.

Tanks have no shields, so don't waste time hitting them with anti-shield beam weapons. Kill tanks with nano-weapons or ballistics.

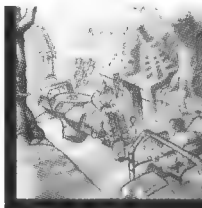
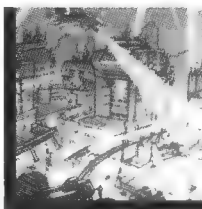
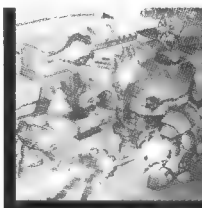
YOU CAN'T DAMAGE A HERC UNTIL YOU CUT THROUGH ITS SHIELD.

Shields are the Herc's exterior defense, so use good anti-shield weapons first. Once you cut through a Herc's shields, switch to anti-armor weapons. (For more on the differences between weapons, see the next tip.) Again, tanks have no shields. So when attacking tanks, skip the anti-shield attack and go right to weapons with good armor penetration.

INSTALL A GOOD MIX OF ANTI-SHIELD AND ANTI-ARMOR WEAPONS ON YOUR VEHICLE.

Some weapons damage shields, some damage armor, and some damage both. Know the difference. Check the damage ratings for each weapon using your Vehicle Depot screen or your *Starsiege* game manual.

Generally, you should pair some sort of energy weapon (to chew through shields) with a concussion or nano-weapon (to punch through armor). Example: Outfit your rig with EMPs (probably the best anti-shield weapon in the game). But also equip it with a set of Blast Cannons or a couple racks of Shrike missiles, which obliterate armor. As designer Dave Selle puts it, "Two EMPs and two Blast Cannons on a Platinum Guard Adjudicator will just tear people a new one."



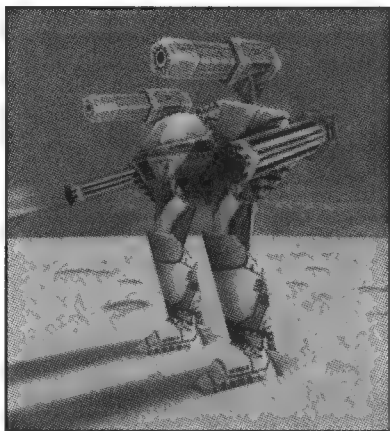
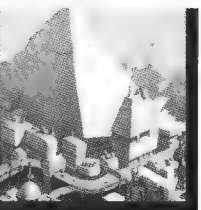
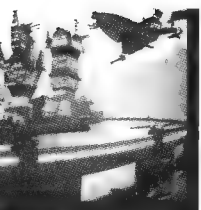


Fig. 6-3.

To fight Hercs, mix good anti-shield weapons like EMPs (here on top of the Minotaur) with armor-mulchers like Heavy Autocannons (bottom).

Another example: Nano-weaponry hits armor hard but barely nicks shields. Against tanks, which have no shields, this is OK. In fact, Nanite Cannons and Nano-Infusers are powerful anti-tank weapons. But their little nano-eaters splatter harmlessly against shields. So be sure to add a good beam weapon or two to your nano-weapons.

PICK THE RIGHT ARMOR.

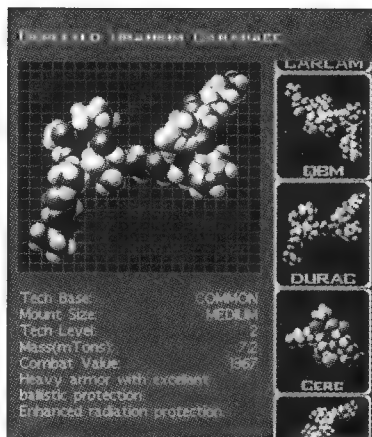


Fig. 6-4.

DURAC is probably the best all-purpose armor.

When you outfit your rig for a mission, know that your armor choice matters. CARLAM is lightweight and reduces your radar signature, but it gets chewed badly by lasers. QBM is pretty average. Ceramic armor is great against beam weapons, but it suffers against Auto-cannons and other concussion weapons.

DURAC is the best all-purpose armor and provides added protection against Radiation Guns. Crystaluminum is the best armor versus electro-plasma weapons, so it serves you well against some of the biggest guns in the game. However, it fairs poorly against lasers and other beam weapons. Finally, Quicksilver is the best tank armor because it repairs itself and offers special protection against armor-eating nano-weapons.

DON'T FORGET THE SPECIALS.

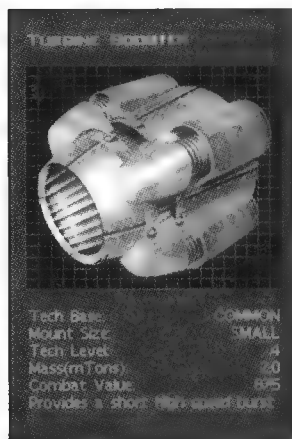
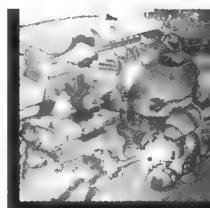
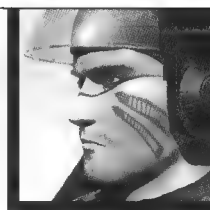


Fig. 6-5. A Turbine Booster can fling you out of a lethal situation in a hurry.

Special components (shield amplifiers, cloaks, and energy-enhancing components) are not only helpful, they're sometimes indispensable. But if you cruise into a few missile volleys without ECM and/or Thermal Diffusion Jammers, you're a dead man. Turbine or Rocket boosters can save your life too. And if you run into an opponent with a RAD Gun, your pilot is toast unless you've installed an Angel Life Support system.





SHIELD MODULATORS ARE GOOD IN DUELS BUT CAN HURT YOU IN A MELEE.

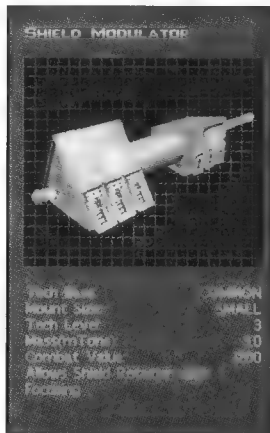
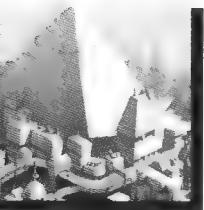
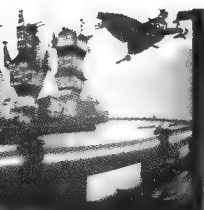


Fig. 6-6.

Shield Modulators are good for one-on-one duels, but they can leave you exposed in a multiplayer match.

A Shield Modulator lets you beef up half your shield, then auto-rotate the beefy half so it always faces your currently targeted opponent. This is great in a one-on-one duel. It forces a single enemy to flail away at your double-thick shield half.

However, the strengthened shield half gains its extra energy at the expense of the opposite side of your shield perimeter. So a second opponent can fire on your weak-shielded side and chew up your armor and internals in no time.

AIM FOR HERC LEGS AND TANK TURRETS.



Fig. 6-7.

Herc legs are very vulnerable. Use Zoom to help target them if you can.

This reiterates a point made earlier. All Hercs are most vulnerable in the feet, legs, and hip areas. Weapon mounts are vulnerable too. A good marksman can use Zoom (press **Z**) to precisely target weapons and pick them off. This works particularly well on bigger, slower Hercs like the Gorgon, Executioner, or Olympian. However, losing its weapons won't kill a Herc. If you want to eliminate a Herc, take out its legs.

Tanks, of course, have no legs. But note that tank armor is thinnest in the turret area.

RAMMING HURTS.

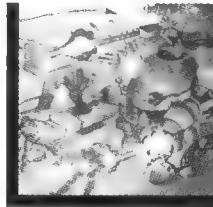


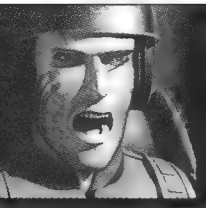
Fig. 6-8.
A 55-ton Disruptor equipped with Electrohull and Turbine Booster will inflict heavy ramming damage.

In *Starsiege*, a collision damages both parties. But remember, the bigger vehicle delivers more damage. Note also that some vehicles are better suited for ramming attacks. Example: An Electrohull-equipped Disruptor tank with a Turbine Booster can slam into an enemy at about 250 kph and inflict massive pain. The Rebel Dreadlock, formerly a heavy construction bulldozer, sports a deadly, earthmoving blade that provides serious ramming capability as well.

DON'T FIRE PLASMA/ENERGY WEAPONS UNTIL THEY'RE FULLY CHARGED.

This is a very important tip. Any plasma or energy based weapon—Laser, Blaster, EMP, and so on—has a “Reload/Lock Time.” This means that after you fire the weapon, it must draw energy from your reactor to recharge itself. *If you fire a plasma/energy weapon before it fully recharges, you reduce the amount of damage you inflict by about half.*





"Even if you fire a Laser at 95 percent of full charge, your shot will do only about 50 percent damage," says designer Dave Selle. "It's far better to wait the extra split-second and fire a fully-charged weapon."

THE EMP IS THE ULTIMATE SHIELD-EATER.

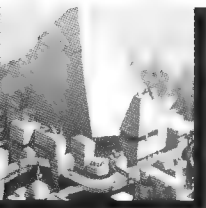
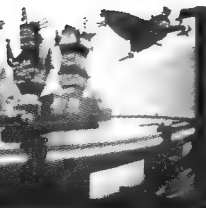
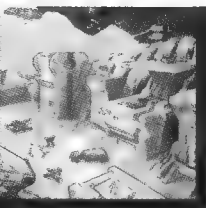


Fig. 6-9. The EMP chews up shields with a passion.

It's always nice to have an Electromagnetic Pulse Cannon (EMP) somewhere in your firing chains. Pound for pound, it's the best anti-shield weapon in your arsenal. The EMP fits on a small mount, so even little guys can carry one and inflict a whopping 625 points of shield damage with every direct hit.

EMPs do very little armor damage though—only 63 points per hit. So consider keeping your EMPs on a separate firing chain from your armor-piercing, ballistic weapons. Once your enemy's shield is down, switch to your ballistic chain and finish the job.

"MISSILE BOATS" CAN RULE OPEN TERRAIN.

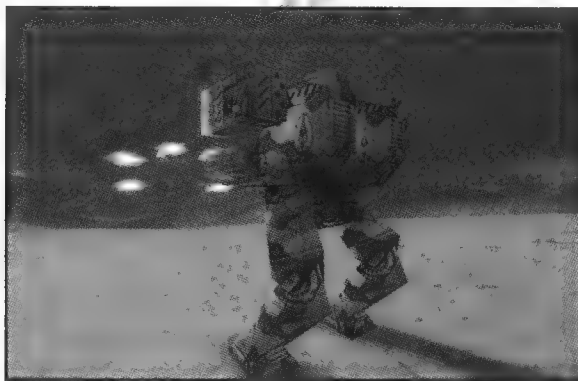


Fig. 6-10.
This Apocalypse with six missile racks and Universal Ammo Pack has a ballistic death grip on the valley below.

Wide open valleys surrounded by hills are the domain of the “missile boat”—any Herc or tank decked out with multiple missile racks. “Missile boats totally rule flat terrain,” says one tester. Any location with at least 1500-2000 yards of good visibility and straight lines of fire (no structures, ridges, or ravines) can offer deadly targeting opportunities for the missile-laden vehicle.

One tip when you arm with missile racks: Take the Universal Ammo Pack special component too. Missiles are powerful but few. The Ammo Pack doubles the number of missiles in each rack.

MIX BOTH MISSILE TYPES WHEN OUTFITTING A “MISSILE BOAT.”

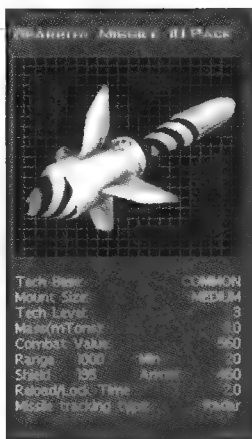
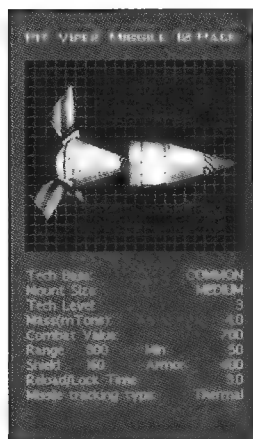
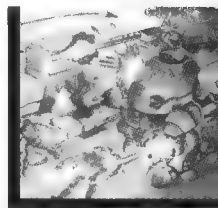
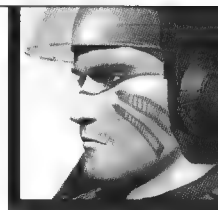


Fig. 6-11.

Pit Vipers seek heat. Sparrows are radar-guided. They make a nice combo because your target usually won't have both types of jammers.

If you install multiple missile racks on your vehicle, carry both the heat-seeking and radar-guided missile varieties. This way, chances are good at least one type will hit the target. Few enemies will carry both Thermal Diffusion *and* ECM jammers.

The Pit Viper and Cybrid Shrike missiles are thermal trackers. The Sparrow, Swarm, Minion, and Aphid missiles are radar trackers.



USE JAMMERS AGAINST MISSILE ATTACKS.

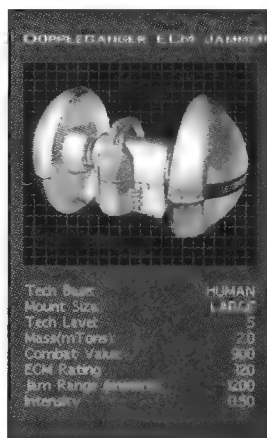
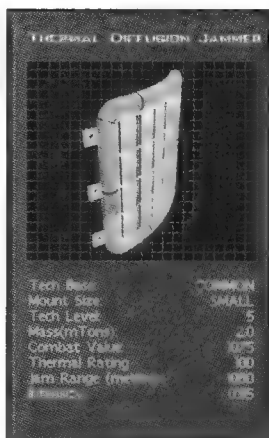


Fig. 6-12.

Combine a Thermal Diffusion Jammer with a Doppelganger ECM Jammer for an almost total immunity to missile strikes.

Here's the flip side of the previous tip. You may know your upcoming mission features enemy missile boats. Or somebody may be slinging missiles like dirt clods in a multiplayer match. Then you should probably install both kinds of jammers—Thermal Diffusion and ECM radar. If you have both, you can make safer attack runs at an enemy missile boat.

Be careful though. Take a zigzag approach. Jamming will prevent missiles from tracking, but even jammed, “unguided,” missiles can still fly straight and knock you silly.

RUN PERPENDICULAR TO INCOMING MISSILE VOLLEYS.

Actually, it's possible to avoid missiles *without* installing jammers. But it requires precise piloting, and it helps to have a speed-enhancing special component too. Here's how: When you see a missile volley approach, wait until the last second. Then turn hard in either direction until you're running perpendicular to the missile flight path. Immediately hit your Turbo or Rocket button (if you have one) to jet out of range. If you time this maneuver right, the missiles can't turn quickly enough to track you within their range limitations. So they fall harmlessly to the ground.

USE TERRAIN AND/OR STRUCTURES AS MISSILE SHIELDS.

When enemy missiles track you, they calculate your position and fly directly at it, oblivious to barriers. So if missiles hit something else on the way, they explode. Therefore, you can use terrain, structures, or even enemy vehicles to shield you. Of course, missiles are fast, so you won't always have time to hide. But if you know there's a missile boat nearby, stick close to anything that can block the flight path. When you see incoming warheads, duck behind a rock or building, slip over the crest of a hill, or maneuver behind a nearby opponent.

USE SHORT-RANGE PUNCH IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS.

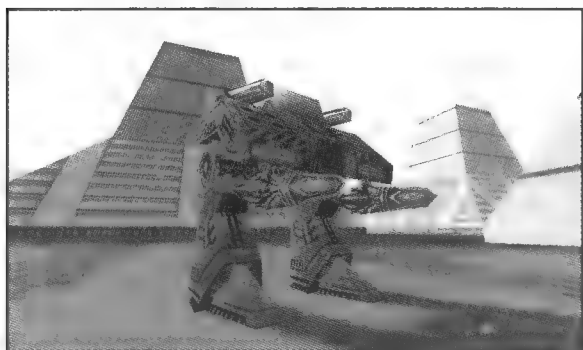


Fig. 6-13.

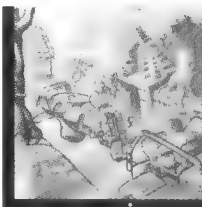
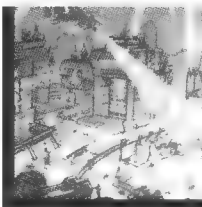
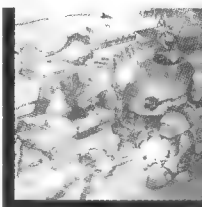
Urban fighting favors heavy firepower and powerful, short-range weapons.

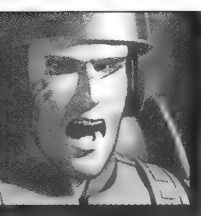
Missiles are largely useless in tight urban quarters. Without room to fully “lock on and seek,” they often zoom harmlessly past close-range targets. So in a city, it's better to skip missile racks and outfit instead with good, punchy, short-range weapons.

Examples: The ELF chews up both shields and armor. The Nanite Cannon or Nano-Infuser inflicts serious armor damage. The Radiation Gun directly attacks an opponent's pilot. The powerful Plasma Cannon takes down both shields and armor equally and seeks the target as well, adding great accuracy.

REMEMBER THE BLAST RADIUS EFFECT.

Some weapons, particularly the bigger ones, hit a target and spread the damage equally over a radius emanating from the point of contact. Therefore, this blast radius can damage multiple parts of a target. Weapons with a big blast radius include MFACs, Heavy Blast Cannons, and most missiles.





NAIL SPIDERS IN THE TUBES.

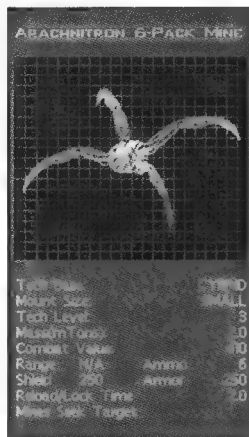


Fig. 6-14.

Arachnitron seeker mines are nasty, but a fast-firing weapon like the Autocannon can nail them before they hit.



Ever seen an enemy unload a six-pack of Arachnitron mines at you? It's not a pretty sight. These nasty little spiders track you across the landscape and deliver 250 points of damage to your shields or armor. But here's a tip. If you have Autocannons, open fire as your opponent releases the mine swarm. You can actually detonate the Arachnitrons as they're leaving the launch tube. What could be more fun than hurting a guy with his own mines?

SIT IN A PROTECTED POSITION AND LOB PLASMA AT UNSUSPECTING TARGETS.



You'll love Plasma Cannons. Plasma beams independently seek their target. So you can sit behind a low structure or just below the crest of a hill and lob plasma fire over the top. Of course, the Plasma Cannon's range is somewhat limited at 500 meters. But its high intensity energy beam hits both shields and armor equally at 400 points per pop.



Smart Guns love to seek little guys.

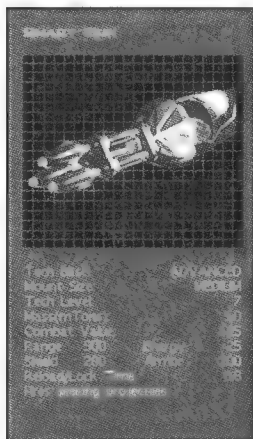


Fig. 6-15.

Smart Guns rarely miss, but they're low on punch. Use them against fast little targets.

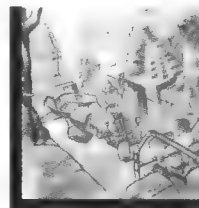
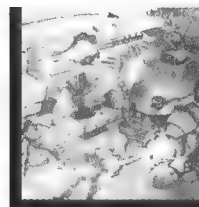
Smart Guns, like Plasma Cannons, fire “seeking projectiles” that almost never miss their target. But they don’t have much kill power. Therefore, they are most effectively used against zippy, little guys who are otherwise hard to hit. In fact, Smart Guns are best installed on equally zippy, little guys like Cybrid Bolos. Then they can run around picking off runners while avoiding the heavy fire of Executioners, Olympians, Gorgons, and other hulking platforms of death.

BLINK GUNS ARE GOOD “NIBBLE” WEAPONS.

Several members of the *Starsiege* design team agreed that the most annoying weapon in the game is probably the Cybrid Blink Gun. It isn’t devastating, but it nibbles at you, bypassing shields and messing up your internals.

“People with Blink Guns tend to get killed early in multiplayer games because they piss off everybody else,” laughs Dave Selle. “It’s not a finisher, but it’s a great weapon for softening up a target.”

Their projectiles are quite fast, so if you put four Blink Guns in a firing chain and leave them unlinked, you can put out a constant stream of accurate, high-energy fire. And you’ll drive enemies nuts: *Stop it! Stop it! Get it off me! Get it off!*





MFACS JUST KICK ASS.

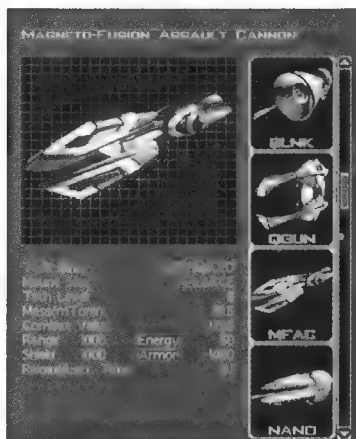
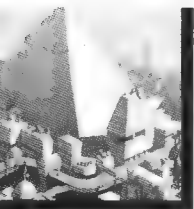


Fig. 6-16.

The MFAC is the hardest-hitting weapon in *Starsiege*. But its slow projectiles often miss mobile targets.

The mighty Magneto-Fusion Assault Cannon (MFAC) is the single most powerful weapon in the game. One hit delivers an awesome 1000 points of damage to either shields *or* armor. And its plasma globe projectile detonates with a nice, big blast radius too. So you can deliver hurt to several parts of your target with a single hit.

Of course, you need access to Tech Level 8 items and a big, strong vehicle. At 10.5 tons apiece, MFACs are a load to carry. But nothing nets a one-shot kill better than a pair of linked MFACs delivering a direct hit to a target's legs. *Ouch!*

KNOW HOW TO OUTFIT AND TWEAK YOUR RIG.

NOTE

Most of these guidelines reiterate important information from the manual or from the general tips listed earlier in this chapter.

One of the most important (and most fun) things you do in *Starsiege* is create your own vehicle configurations. To outfit effective fighting machines, you must understand how the various weapons, shields, armor, and special components affect each other.

A careful reading of the *Starsiege* game manual will give you the basic knowledge you need. But here are a few important guidelines to remember, courtesy of *Starsiege* mission coordinator and game guru, Graeme Bayless.

Engines

Engines are simple. Your goal is to get enough juice to reach Top Speed and Top Acceleration. Sometimes you just can't do it because your engine choice is limited. This can be due to your tech level access, or you might just have too much other good stuff weighing you down. That's OK. But in general, take the biggest engine you can afford and try to max out your speed.

Reactors

Reactors, too, are straightforward. Your goal is to install a reactor with enough *output per second* to handle the *energy demand per second* of your vehicle's weapons and components. Each reactor's output per second is listed in the on-screen Vehicle Depot info and in the *Starsiege* game manual. Your vehicle's energy demand changes as you add and subtract weapons and/or components. This is all listed under the picture of your current vehicle in the Vehicle Depot.

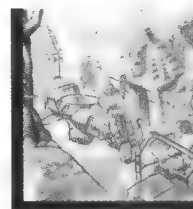
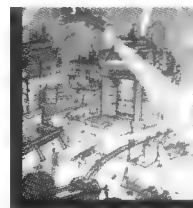
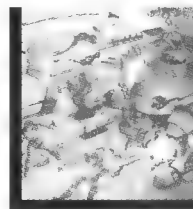
It's sometimes impossible to fully sate your energy demand. This is particularly true if you carry huge, energy-hungry weapons such as Radiation Guns, Quantum Guns, ELFs, MFACs, Particle Beam Weapons, or Plasma Cannons. However, your vehicle can function with an energy deficit—an energy demand per second that exceeds your reactor's output per second—for a while, anyway.

When a deficit occurs, vehicle components suck juice from your reactor's energy reserve. Then they can operate normally—until the reserve runs dry. When that happens, critical components, such as targeting computers, sensors, and other displays, will shut down temporarily until the reactor recharges.

Don't be afraid to go with an under-powered reactor. If you use energy wisely, you can avoid systems shutdown. Keep an eye on the energy reserve gauge near the sensor display on your HUD. When it nears zero, your vehicle will announce, "Low energy." Stop using energy-eating components (Cloaks, in particular) or energy weapons until the reactor recharges itself.

Computers

When asked about computers, mission coordinator Graeme Bayless laughed and said, "Simple rule. Never, ever take the Basic Computer." This is because the auto-targeting key (T) doesn't work; plus, you don't get a lead indicator reticule. The Advanced Computer is much nicer. It auto-selects the nearest identified target on your sensors. It zooms better. It even lets you scan/identify things (with I) from a greater range.



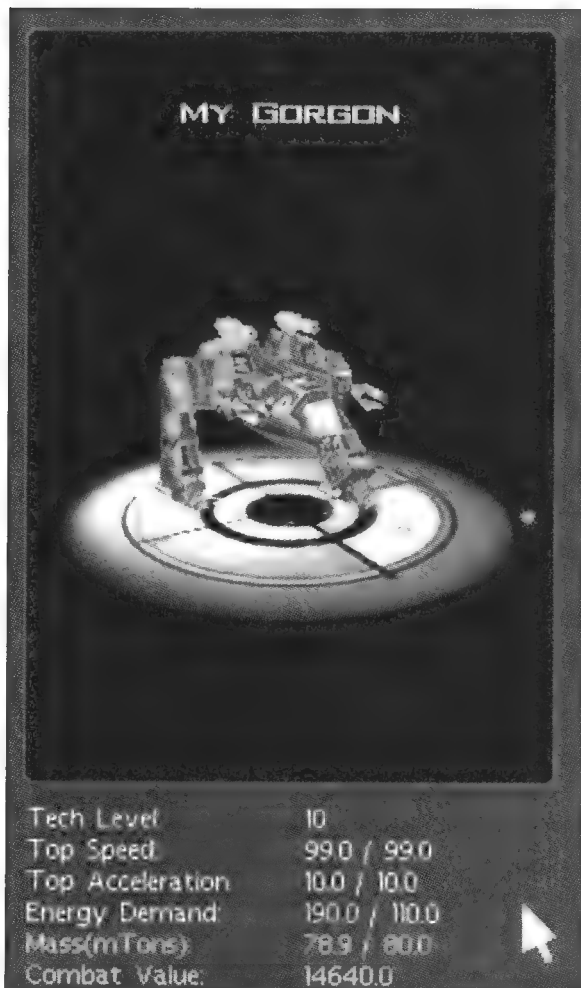


Fig. 6-17.

Check your vehicle's energy demand in the Vehicle Depot. The first number listed here (190.0) is the energy demand per second. The second number (110.0) is your currently installed reactor's output per second. As you can see, my Gorgon is operating with an energy deficit. So it will draw from the reactor's energy reserve to make up the difference.

Shields

To understand how shields work, you have to understand what their numbers mean.

The *Protection Factor* listed under every shield is the total number of points of damage the shield can absorb before it fails.

The *Charge rate* lists how many points of shield energy are added to the Protection Factor every second.

The *Efficiency* rating is probably the most important number to understand. All incoming damage points are divided by the Efficiency number for each shield. The resulting number represents the number of shield energy points that actually get sucked from your Protection Factor. The higher your Efficiency rating, the more punishment your shields can absorb.

For example: You have a FastCharge shield. You get hit by an MFAC blast carrying 1000 points of damage. Your FastCharge has a 2.5 efficiency rating. So the 1000 damage points are divided by 2.5. Therefore, only 400 points of energy are actually sucked out of your shields.

Armor

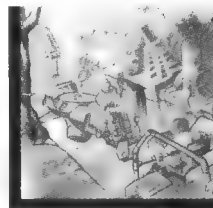
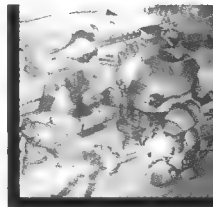
Armor is a good thing, but, in general, it probably won't make or break your vehicle. To fully understand how armor works in *Starsiege*, you need to understand something called "shrug." Shrug is the ability of armor to bounce away a percentage of certain types of weapon damage. Example: Ceramic armor has a high shrug rate against beam weapons like lasers, but very low shrug against ballistic damage.

In general, Depleted Uranium Carapace (DURAC) armor is probably the best all-purpose armor in the game. It has a solid shrug factor against most types of weapon damage. However, it offers slightly better protection vs. Radiation Guns than other armor. Otherwise, DURAC provides no extra benefit for a specific type of damage.

Sensors

The most important number in your sensor information is the Active Range. This measures how many meters your radar can see in active mode, which is the mode you use 98 percent of the time. A lengthy Active Range is good for multiplayer games when you're equipped with long-range weapons—missiles, in particular. The sooner you see your enemy, the sooner you can launch ballistics and hit him before he hits you.

The sensor's Resolution rating is important too. It measures how well a sensor detects objects within the given range. The higher the resolution, the better your sensor detects even cloaked vehicles. Resolution is particularly important in multiplayer games; low-powered sensors can't see cloaked guys very well.





In the *Starsiege* single-player campaign missions, stick with the Ultralight Sensor (except in special situations mentioned in this guide). This frees up vehicle space for other, more important components. "This is the last place you use tonnage," says Graeme Bayless. "You want the space for weapons and defenses."

Special Components

ECM and Thermal Diffusion Jammers are great if you face missiles. If no missiles come, however, jammers are wasted space. Pay attention to the briefings before each campaign mission. Sometimes you'll get tipped off about the presence of missiles in the upcoming fray.

Cloaks are great for multiplayer use. However, cloaks are less effective in single player. There are some missions where the bad guys will see you anyway in order to preserve the integrity of the mission plot, i.e., sometimes they cheat so the mission works right.

Other good special components include the Shield Modulator and Battery. (For a discussion of the Shield Modulator, see the tips earlier in this chapter.) The Battery adds a lot of energy reserve to your vehicle. This can be very important in the later campaigns when you're carrying energy hogs like the MFAC and the Particle Beam Weapon.

Weapons

Here, courtesy of Graeme Bayless, is a quick rundown of various weapon types:

Beam weapons such as lasers and EMPs hit shields far harder than armor. Ballistic weapons (Autocannons, Blast Cannons, and missiles) and nano-weapons (Nano-Infuser and Nanite Cannon) hit armor far harder than they hit shields. Special weapons such as Blasters, the MFAC, Quantum Gun, Plasma Cannon, and the Particle Beam Weapon hit both shields *and* armor hard.

Lasers and Heavy Lasers are very precise weapons. They allow you to target and score a nearly instantaneous hit.

Blasters hit really hard and shoot really far—1200 meters, in fact. But Blaster projectiles can be hard to hit with because they travel slowly.

The MFAC is immensely powerful and, according to Bayless, "rules time and space." It gives you one-shot, one-kill capability. It also has a blast radius, which means the damage is spread across an area of the target. But its projectile's slow velocity gives targets plenty of time to dodge, and its reload time is an agonizingly slow 3.1 seconds.



The EMP is nice and light at only 1.5 tons, but it's the ultimate shield ripper. It does 625 points of shield damage per hit, but very little armor damage. Be sure to partner your EMPs with armor-hacking ballistic or nano-weapons.

NOTES ON COMPUTER SQUADMATES

Squad management is a critical component of your strategy for the *Starsiege* single-player campaigns. Here are some considerations to keep in mind.

Let your squadmates get their share of kills.

The more kills your squadmates get, the better they get. With enough experience, *Starsiege* squad members can get very good. This becomes important in the latter stages of the campaigns when the missions get extremely difficult. The more skilled your squadmates, the easier your job.

Remember: You are as good as you are. But your squadmates are only as good as you let them be.

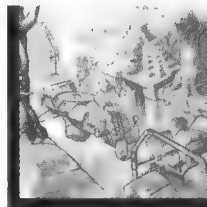
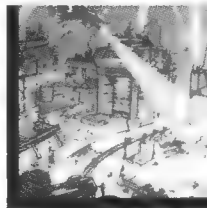
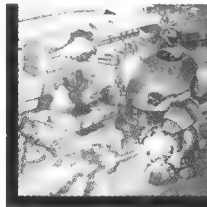


Fig. 6-18.

Don't hog kills. Try to keep all squad members involved in the action. Balanced squads are effective squads.

Squadmates waste ammo, but they're good in close.

In general, the squadmates in *Starsiege* are good short-range fighters who love to zip in close to their targets. However, they tend to spew ammunition far too liberally, expending their supply before long. So outfit your squad with good reactors and punchy short-range energy weapons (with their unlimited ammo) like the ELF. Computer squadmates tend to be good marksmen too, so you can hang Blasters or Heavy Blasters on their mounts and get solid results.

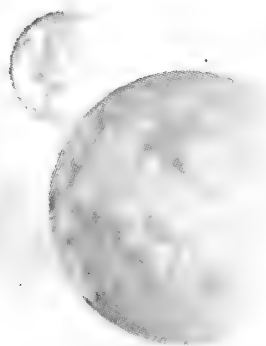
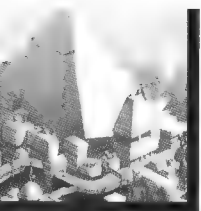




Computer squadmates can't use certain special components.

In the campaign mission, your computer squadmates are (or become) excellent pilots. They're intelligent enough to activate the jammers you assign to their vehicles. Other components automatically activate, such as the shield amplifier, the Battery, the Field Stabilizer, the Nano-Repair Module, and the Angel Life Support system.

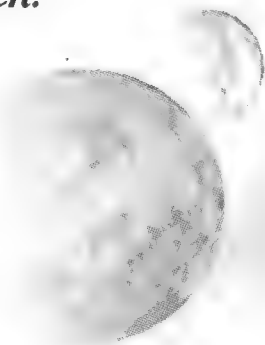
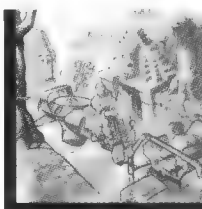
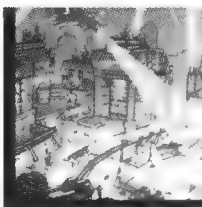
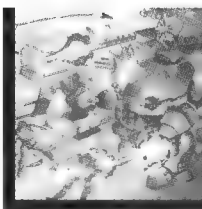
Other special components are wasted on your squad vehicles. For example, they won't use the LTADS, Shield Modulator, Shield Capacitor, or Energy Capacitor. However, squadmates will cloak if you cloak and if they have Cloaks installed. Same with Turbo or Rocket Blaster, they won't use these components on their own, but they can do so when following your lead.



MULTIPLAYER STRATEGIES

Chapter 7

As in Chapter 6, the Starsiege design and testing teams provided the bulk of the following tips. This chapter opens with some general multiplayer advice. It then focuses on specific tactics for each of the three main types of multiplayer games—Capture the Flag, Death Match, and Team Death Match.





GENERAL MULTIPLAYER TIPS

Here are a few tips that apply to any type of multiplayer engagement in *Starsiege*.

Know the terrain.

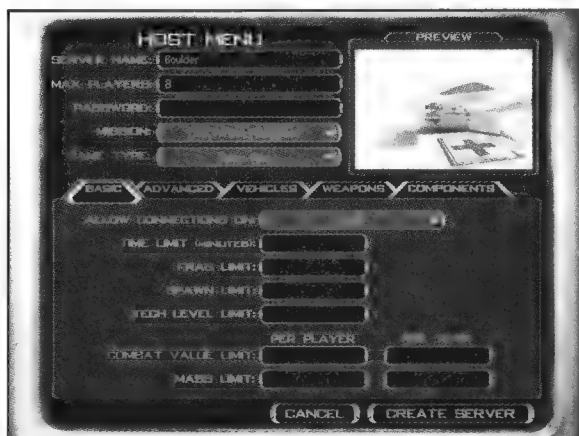
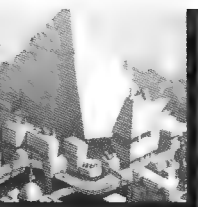
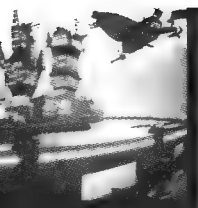


Fig. 7-1.

Conduct a thorough offline exploration of each multiplayer mission before you go online to play.

The *Starsiege* multiplayer terrains are designed to offer lots of unexpected twists. A seemingly flat plain may feature hidden craters, ravines, or undulations perfectly crafted to hide an enemy ambush team. Be sure to fully explore each multiplayer mission terrain before you actually play it.

How? Before you connect online to a server (or create your own), select the Multiplayer option from the Main Menu. Then click on Create Game while still offline. Highlight the mission you plan to play, select Create Server, and then select Join Game. You drop into the mission in a deserted landscape, free to explore every nook and cranny.

Know all Repair and Reload pad locations.

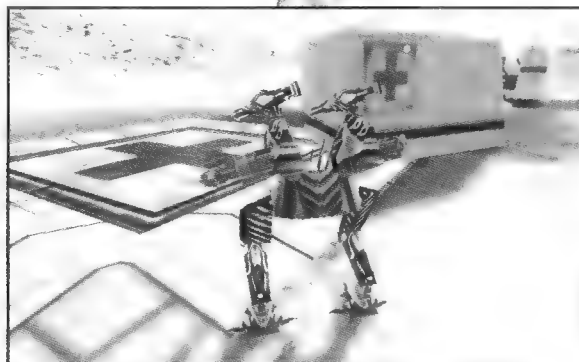


Fig. 7-2.

Know where every Repair/Reload pad is located in each mission.

Be sure to scout the locations of all Repair and Reload pads in the multiplayer mission you'll play. This means finding both your own pads (for future use) and your enemy's pads (for future destruction).

Take a vehicle that matches your skill level.

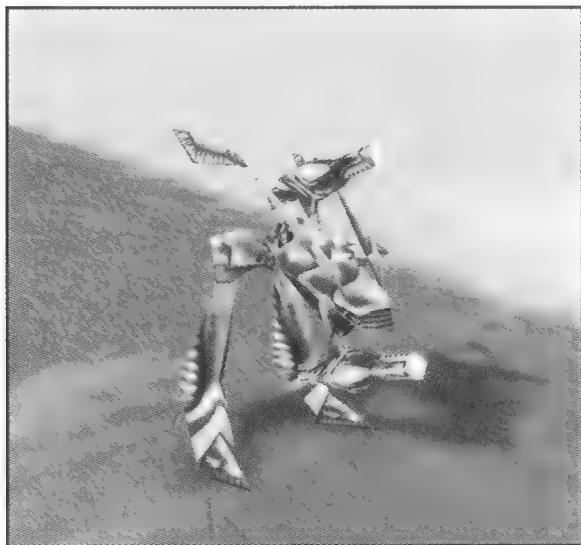


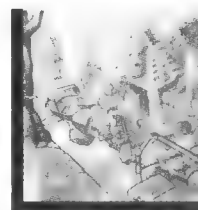
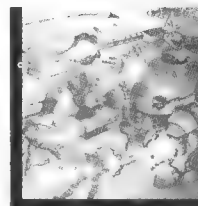
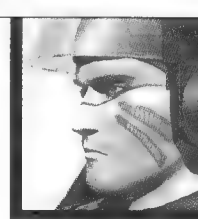
Fig. 7-3.

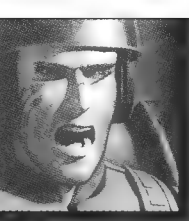
Blaster Goads are fun but vulnerable, so they're best suited for advanced Herc pilots.

This is an important point. Of course, your "skill level" is relative to the level of your competition. But some vehicle configurations are better suited for throttle-savvy pilots. Some are better for marksmen, some for aggressive gunfighters, some for sneaky weasels, and so on. (Don't worry: Each of these pilot types and corresponding vehicle configurations will be discussed later.)

For example, I asked Dave Selle, who designed the *Starsiege* multiplayer arenas, what he likes to ride. His answer: A Goad with a pair of Blasters. "It's really fast with good hitting power," he says. But lighter vehicles like the Goad don't leave much room for error. "I'd say the speed configurations are more suited for advanced pilots," he adds. "You can shuck and jive and have a lot of fun, but you only get one or maybe two mistakes, and then you're toast."

Beginners should outfit a heavier rig with Plasma or Smart Guns, which track targets and make up for inaccurate aim. Missiles are good for rookies too. Their range is long, and they also track targets.

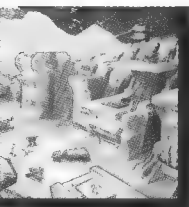




Don't be predictable.

Rookies often learn this seemingly obvious tip the hard way. In multiplayer gunfights, enemies will get on your tail sooner or later. You can swivel and return fire. But by the time you face them, your shields will be down, and you'll probably lose the ensuing exchange. Better to run and start dodging. This lets you recharge your shield energy as you try to circle back around to engage your tormentor.

But remember: Never dodge the same way when you're running. Some people get into predictable patterns of dodging—back and forth, back and forth. Experienced enemies will quickly recognize this error and adjust their firing leads accordingly. Pretty soon you'll be taking regular hits up the tailpipe. This is not a pleasant experience.



Learn the intricacies of missile fire.

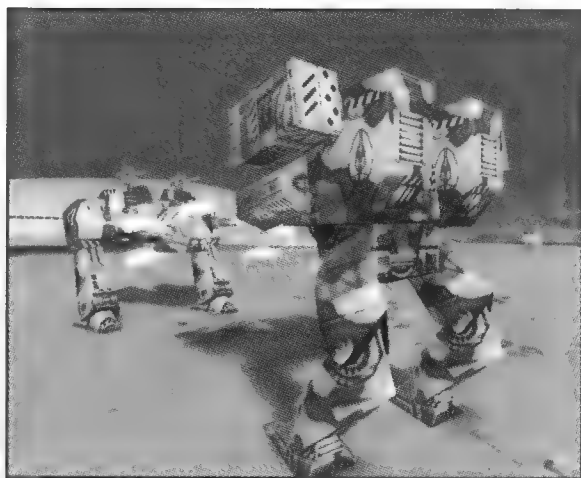
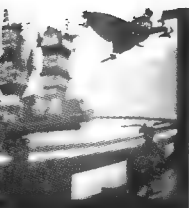


Fig. 7-4.

Missiles aren't just long-range weapons, if you know what you're doing.

Missiles at long range offer a no-brainer attack style. Just target, lock, let fly, and forget about 'em. But missiles **are** still effective at close range if you fire them correctly.

Opponents who want to avoid **your** missiles will try to get “under your guns”—that is, inside your minimum missile range. But missiles still fly straight. Therefore, one advanced tactic, courtesy of Dave Selle, is to set up firing chains. One of Dave's chains will contain all missile launchers for long range shots, another links launchers on the right side only, and another combines launchers on the left side only.

“Missiles release from one side,” says Selle, “and they fly straight within the minimum range. So if someone slips in close on me, I just swivel one side forward, select the firing chain with the missile launchers on that side, and sling “unguided” missiles into the guy

from close range." Missiles have a good blast radius, too. So even if you hit the ground near the target, you'll inflict damage.

Note that on smaller Hercs, the weapon mounts may be vertically aligned. So instead of swiveling left or right to fire missiles at close range, you tilt up or down.

High ground offers advantages... and disadvantages.

In conventional military strategy, high ground is a desired position. But the Dynamix testing team disagrees on its tactical worth in *Starsiege* combat. Some testers value an overview of the battlefield. They recommend sitting atop a ridge with missiles and long-range weapons. Then you can dominate the plain or valley below, dealing out death well before the enemy's return fire can cause significant damage to your vehicle.

However, other testers feel too visible and exposed on high ground. They prefer to use canyons, depressions, craters, and various natural and man-made structures to cut off firing angles and provide cover. "Actually, I love it when opponents sit on a ridge or hill," says one. "Easy to find, easy to target. The shape stands out on the horizon. I mean, he's up there announcing, *Here I am! Shoot me!*"

TIP

If you prefer high ground, be sure to add a cloak to your arsenal.

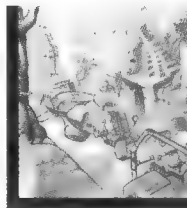
CAPTURE THE FLAG TACTICS

Overall, Capture the Flag is a more speed-oriented game than Death Match or Team Death Match. People tend to ride faster vehicles—Seekers, Goads, Talons, Bolos. They usually rig them out in lighter, more maneuverable configurations. After all, the object of the game is to move the flag from there to here. Who better to do so than a fast little Herc?

Have a Plan

Capture the Flag is ultimately a team game. And the team with a solid plan and clear roles for all team members has the advantage. It's standard to send at least two separate squads of speedy runners to grab the enemy flag. Ideally, their runs are coordinated to hit the flag at the same time or in slightly staggered waves. A massed attack stands the best chance of someone reaching the flag and getting out alive.

Once the flag is nabbed, all other runners immediately provide aggressive escort for the flag bearer. Escorts should be willing to sacrifice themselves—to draw fire, to provide a





physical shield, to cut off firing angles—and to just stand in front of the pursuit and get knocked around, if necessary.

Next, deploy a squad of middleweight Hercs along each natural route from your base to the enemy base. This is your first line of defense, and it provides cover fire for your returning flag grabbers.

Finally, plant a couple of heavyweight Hercs or tanks near or even atop your own flag. Their sole directive is to defend. These defenders should bristle with long-range weapons to fire on any blitz that threatens your flag.



Send speedy runners to grab the flag.



Fig. 7-5.

A speedy Seeker with a Turbine Booster can nab a flag with a 300 kph sprint.



This is mentioned in the previous tip. Expect to see a *lot* of defensive firepower around any flag emplacement. Even the heaviest shields and armor won't prevent lethal damage in a slow, lumbering flag attack. Your best bet is to send in the sprinters, and send them *en masse*.

Again, Seekers or Goads are good, as are Talons and the Predator grav-tank. Be sure each has engines capable of achieving top speed and acceleration for its particular chassis. Then add Turbine or Rocket boosters for that extra burst of escape velocity once the enemy flag is nabbed.

Armament is almost meaningless for these sprinters because their job is not to fight. One option is a pair of Smart Guns, which seek targets. These are very effective for hunting down smaller, faster vehicles. But again, guns are a secondary consideration. The key for

flag grabbers is speed and acceleration. You might also want to add some defensive special components such as jammers. In particular, a Thermal Diffuser can ward off the big, heat-seeking missiles that will kill you if you're a little guy.

Or try the cloaked Bolo flag snatcher.

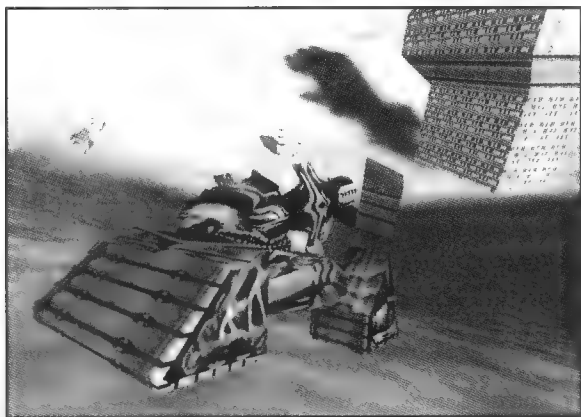


Fig. 7-6.

Park a cloaked Bolo on a hill overlooking the enemy flag and wait for an opening. Then engage your Turbine Booster and make a run.

Some of the *Starsiege* testers like Cybrid Bolos for flag-grabbing runs. Tanks have three special slots, so you can outfit them with a Battery, a Turbine Booster, and a Cloak. Then add good, long-range weapons, like Blasters.

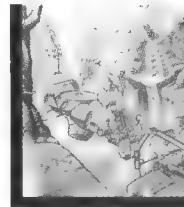
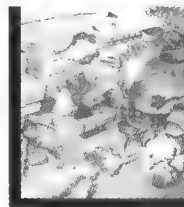
“With the Battery, Bolos can stay cloaked for long periods of time,” says one tester. His favorite tactic: Lurk cloaked behind the enemy base until an opening appears. Then snag the flag and sprint home using the Turbo boost.

Use heavyweights for flag defense.



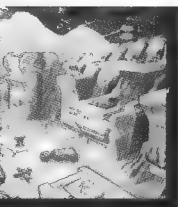
Fig. 7-7.

Use big guys for flag defense. But give them tracking weapons—Smart Guns and Plasma Cannons—for accuracy against speedy attackers.





Many waves of runners will seek your flag during a typical Capture the Flag session. So a common strategy is to plant big, beefy “linebackers” next to, or even on top of, your flag. Massive Executioners, Olympians, or Gorgons with lots of guns and good long-range sensors make excellent flag defenders.



Big, slow defenders have drawbacks, however. “The problem with the big, beefy flag defender is if a Turbo-equipped Seeker slips in and manages to grab the flag and run—well, you’d better have really good aim,” says one tester, “because you get only one or two shots to nail him before he’s long gone.”

Keep in mind that your heavy guys probably won’t be fighting other heavy guys. Don’t arm them with the big whackin’ weapons like Particle Beams, MFACs, or Blast Cannons. Instead, install Smart Guns, missiles, and Plasma Cannons. These weapons seek and thus are more effective against the speedy, little Seekers who sprint in to steal your pennant.



An alternative flag defender is the middleweight Herc, such as a Minotaur or Basilisk. These vehicles still feature excellent firepower. They also have enough speed to get over a hill and chase sneaky, flag-grabbing Goads or Talons. Overall, you probably won’t see a lot of mid-sized Hercs in Capture the Flag.

Try the Myrmidon flag defense.

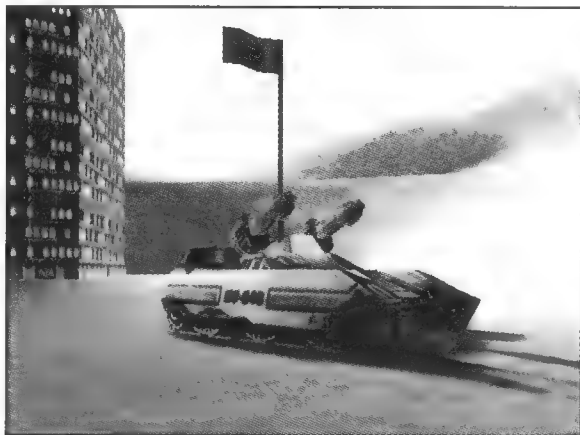


Fig. 7-8.
Park your Myrmidon directly atop the flag with a pair of Plasma Cannons. Dare the little guys to knock you off.

Some Dynamix testers advocate designating a Myrmidon with twin Plasma Cannons as your primary flag defender. Again, Plasma Cannons track targets, so even speedy flag grabbers like Bolos and Seekers will take some hits.

"Little guys can't take more than four or five plasma hits without falling over real pretty," says one tester.

Plus, it's very difficult to ram a 90-ton Myrmidon off the flag. It hurts in fact. So if you park a Myrmidon atop your flag, enemy runners will have to kill the big fellow to get at the prize.

DEATH MATCH TIPS

NOTE

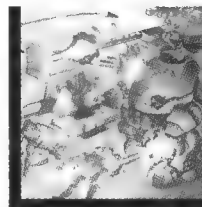
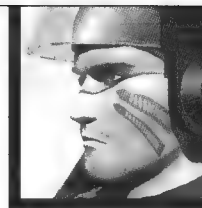
Some particularly unscrupulous carrion-eaters will lurk near Repair Pads, waiting for the wounded to stumble in. Obviously, Hercs who seek out Repair Pads are probably weak, vulnerable, on the verge of death perhaps. With a few well-placed shots, vultures can reap the benefits of somebody else's hard work.

Dynamix testers have developed many effective fighting styles for *Starsiege* Death Match. Some like the big, lumbering guys with lots of firepower; some like the nimble, little guys with high maneuverability. Their primary advice to you: Be creative and flexible. Develop your own style according to your unique set of skills and preferences. Here are a few surefire tactics to try if you find your individual style is getting stale.

Be a vulture.

Yes, it pays to scavenge. Stay on the periphery, snipe and run, and avoid the big dog-piles. Keep switching targets until you find a nice, juicy red spot on someone. Then hustle to take out your target before somebody else finishes the kill. If you employ this strategy, use a fast, mobile Herc—a Goad, a Seeker, or even a Talon.

Some particularly unscrupulous carrion-eaters will lurk near Repair Pads, waiting for the wounded to stumble in. Obviously, Hercs who seek out Repair Pads are probably weak, vulnerable, on the verge of death perhaps. With a few well-placed shots, vultures can reap the benefits of somebody else's hard work.





Be a weasel.

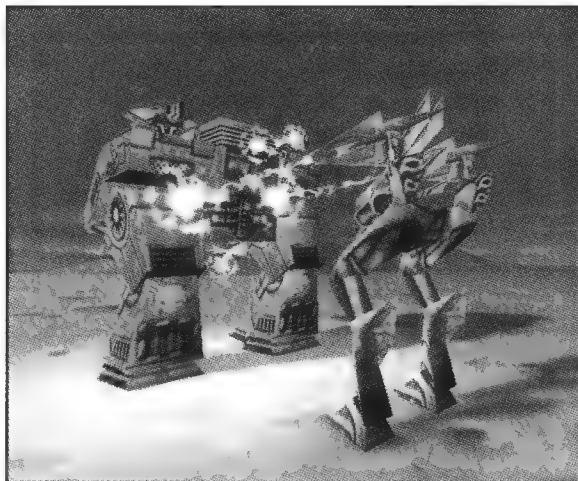


Fig. 7-9.

Weasels just love to hang twin ELF's on a Seeker. Cloak and sneak up behind unsuspecting ELF fodder for some close-range mauling.

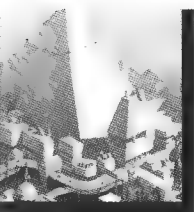


Weasels be proud! Cloak and sneak around! Creep up behind enemies! One favorite weasel tactic is the cloaked ELF attack. The ELF (Electron Flux Whip) can shred a target's shields and armor with frightening fury. However, its range is a measly 150 meters. So it's restricted to quick vehicles that can slip in close to the enemy. Cloak a Goad, Seeker, or Bolo, switch to passive radar to sneak in behind a target, then unleash the slicing-dicing ELF.

Be a wolf.

You need at least one partner for this one. Several *Starsiege* testers express a fondness for a tactic they call the "wolfpack." If one Goad alone is fast and hard to hit, two or more Goads working together are a targeting nightmare. If outfitted with complementary weapons, a Goad "wolfpack" can be deadly.

Load one Goad with a Heavy Laser and an EMP for shield work, another with Heavy Autocannons for armor-piercing. (Or give both Blasters, which work well against shields *and* armor.) Pick a target and circle it, keeping your vehicles 180 degrees apart in the circle. This way, no matter which way the target turns, one of you is always behind it. Again, the beam weapons knock out its shields, and the ballistic guns puncture its armor. It's a lethal combination.



Or be a big, honking finger of death.

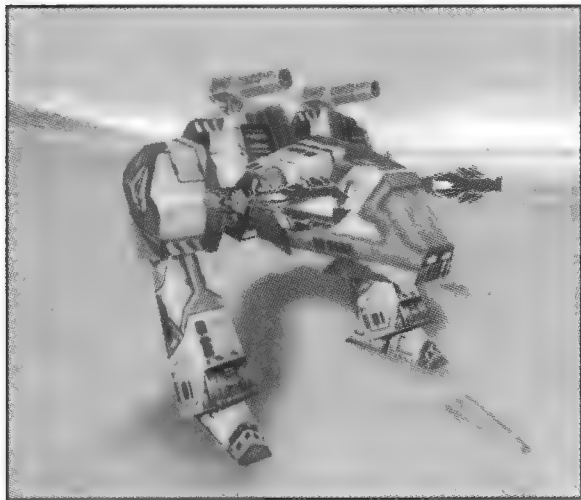


Fig. 7-10.

A Gorgon with twin MFACs and twin EMPs is a favorite “finger of death” configuration.

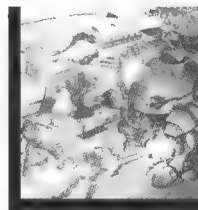
Huge gunboats are very popular in Death Match missions. And why not? In an Executioner or Olympian, you can dish it out *and* you can take it. Unfortunately, you also tend to draw a *lot* of attention to yourself. So buy the best shields and armor, along with some big guns—MFACs, Particle Beams, Rail Guns, and so forth. You can gain room for all this heavy hardware by downgrading sensors and engines. You don’t need speed or long-range sight. You’re a power hog, man.

One favorite rig of the testing crew is a Platinum Guard Executioner with four Particle Beam Weapons. Mission coordinator Graeme Bayless likes a Gorgon with twin EMPs and twin MFACs. Others like a Cybrid Adjudicator with two EMPs for shield-ripping and two Blast Cannons for armor-chewing.

Mid-sized Hercs need a niche.

If you want to try middleweight vehicles in a Death Match, find a particular configuration that allows you to do one thing really well. Example: An Apocalypse has six weapon mounts. Install four racks of radar missiles, two racks of thermal missiles, and a Universal Ammo Pack to double your pleasure.

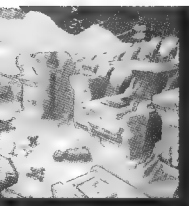
Now you have a niche: *You are the missile platform!* Sit on a hilltop and go ballistic on the melee below. Any target without jammers is dead. Keep doing it over and over until you become the best missile boat pilot that ever lived.





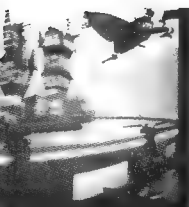
Don't be Mister Flexible.

The previous point—find your niche—applies to Death Match combat in general. Players seem to fare better if they hone one particular set of tactical skills and configure a vehicle to specifically execute those tactics. The idea is to try to do one thing better than anybody else. Then do it again and again and again until it becomes second nature.



Good pilots love the Blaster Goad.

As mentioned previously, designer Dave Selle, among others, is fond of the basic Cybrid Goad equipped with twin Blasters for Death Match combat. It's fast, and it hits hard. A good Goad pilot can latch onto your tail and never let go. As Selle points out, however, the Goad is a vulnerable vehicle. In a wild dogpile, keep circling, avoid head-to-head exchanges, watch your six, and run when the crossfire gets too hot.



Try other specialty rigs.

Here are some of the more popular configurations for Death Match combat:

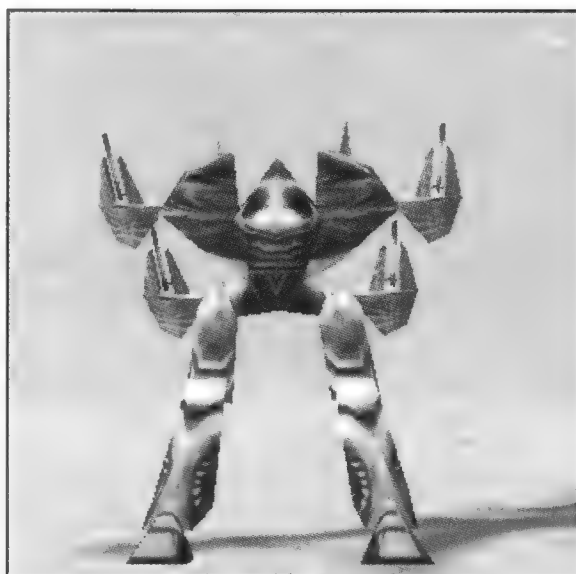


Fig. 7-11.

A Shepherd stacked with claw-like Nano-Infusers is the ultimate tank killer.

First, a Shepherd with four Nano-Infusers is a tank's worst nightmare. Nano-Infusers hardly nick shields, but they eat armor for breakfast. Plus, they're light weapons, so you can upgrade your Shepherd's defenses to premium quality shields and armor. Shepherds are fairly maneuverable, which allows you to get close with Nano-Infusers and target either tanks or Hercs who've lost shield power.

Second, rig a Shepherd, Minotaur, or any fast, medium vehicle with a Cuttlefish Cloak and four racks of HHG Proximity Charges. (This is another Graeme Bayless favorite.) These charges inflict tremendous damage, but they're not too accurate. You need to execute short-range attacks—hence, the Cuttlefish. You cloak, sneak in behind big guys, uncloak, and toss the mines into their backsides.

Third, the Myrmidon is the 90-ton *Tank of Doom*. It can carry heavy Quicksilver armor, so it's very tough. Its turret is vulnerable (as always in a tank), but with two extra-large weapon mounts, it can carry a pair of MFACs and just slaughter people. As Bayless puts it, "In a Myrmidon, you can bring the big whoopin' stick." Plus it has one medium and two large special component mounts. So you can outfit the vehicle with both types of jammers and a good Cloak. The bad news is it's a slow, heavy tank with no shields. So if you get a big gunboat on your tail, you'll probably take a lot of damage.

Cloak to stay out of enemy guns' sites.

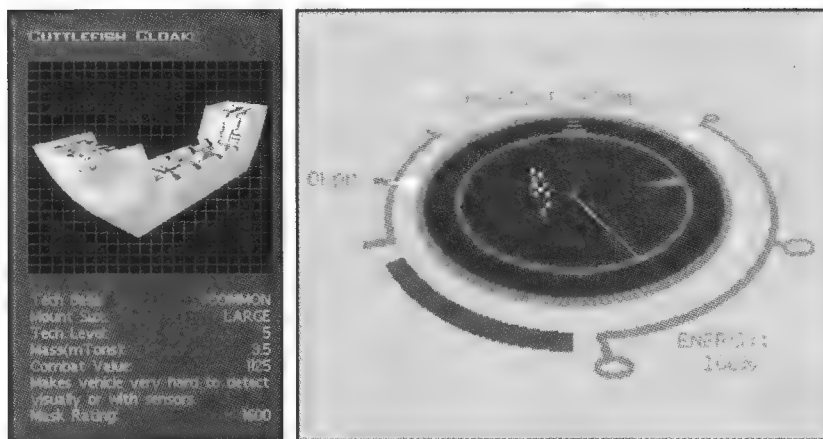
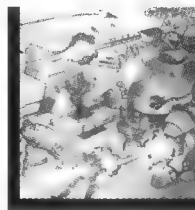


Fig. 7-12.
A Cuttlefish Cloak and passive radar are good company in a 16-player Death Match melee.

First of all, know that Cloaks rule in Death Match. Why? In a multiplayer melee, a lot of targeting is done manually. That is, most players weave through a dogfight and *visually* select targets. They use the crosshairs and the Target Select button (usually the right mouse button). Obviously, if you're cloaked, you won't get targeted as much.

Use passive radar to track enemies.

Again, do whatever you can to avoid being targeted in the midst of multiplayer madness. Passive radar reduces your radar signature enough to avoid detection in certain situations.





In fast, furious action, you just might avoid enough hits to gain an edge in the final scoring.

Cloak to hide your damage status.

Cloaks are good when you're hurt, too.

"People are like sharks in Death Match," says Dave Selle. "They see a little red on you, and it's like blood in the water. Easy kill! Easy kill!"

When you're badly damaged, cloak immediately and slink away. Cloaking hides your damage status from the sharks. Also, switch to passive sensors to reduce your radar presence. Head straight to a Repair pad, but be wary! Chances are good that vultures lurk nearby, waiting to prey on the walking wounded. Stay cloaked while you crouch on the pad.



Use a cloaked Disruptor to ram legs.

This is a fun one. First, add a Battery and Cloak to a Disruptor tank. Slip behind an enemy Herc, fire your Disruptor cannon to slow the target, then ram its legs repeatedly. The tank's Electrohull ramming device hurts really badly. The Disruptor chassis is highly mobile, with good speed and acceleration. Therefore, this ramming tactic can be quite effective in a slam-bang multiplayer melee.

Stay cloaked though! Herc pilots tend to hate tanks anyway, but they *really* like to gang up on annoying Disruptors.



Make provisional alliances.

In a standard Death Match, it's technically every man for himself. But that shouldn't preclude making the occasional Machiavellian alliance. Work in pairs to target particularly nasty opponents or to simply increase both of your kill ratios. Even if your provisional partner eventually gets more points than you (or backstabs you), you both come out ahead in the long run. At the end of a multiplayer session, it's much better to be ranked second than last, right?

In any case, if you don't do it, someone else will. So to increase survivability, find a partner.

Pick a complementary ally.

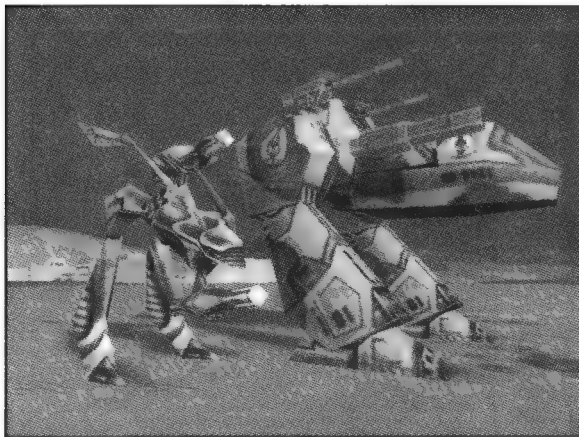


Fig. 7-13.

Here's a good partnership—a Gorgon with Blast Cannons and EMPs paired with a speedy Blaster Goad to watch the Gorgon's tail.

In general, don't make an alliance with someone rigged like you unless you both have a multipurpose array of weapons and features. Find a friend whose vehicle complements yours. If you have a shield-busting rig loaded with beam or plasma weapons, pair up with an armor-punching guy bearing ballistic weapons. If you have short-range weapons like ELF's or Nano-Infusers, find a missile boat partner with a rack or two of long-range Aphids or Sparrows. Or find someone with good long-range guns (Railguns, Blast Cannons, or Particle Beam Weapons). If you have a big honking gunboat, find a speedy, little buddy to cover your tail.

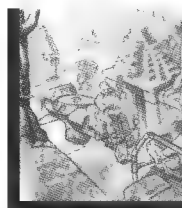
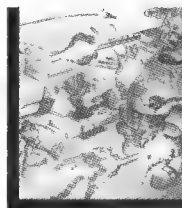
If you have a partner, communicate clear roles.

Two-on-two sparring matches are a lot of fun in Death Match games. But as always, the advantage goes to the more organized pair. Assuming you have complementary rigs (as noted in the previous tip), define some clear roles. Example: You have Lasers, so you pair up with a missile boat. Your role is to dogfight and take down enemy shields. Your partner's job is to be patient. When the target's shields are finally down, your cohort can launch a ballistic strike to punch through the now-exposed armor.

In addition, when the missile boat runs out of ammo, his partner's Lasers should keep him protected as he visits the nearest Reload pad.

Aggressive Death Match Players need good shields.

Some *Starsiege* gamers like to load up a big rig, hop in the ring, and slug it out toe-to-toe. If you're into slugfests, count on taking a lot of hits. Shields go down quickly in such an





environment. Therefore, take a shield amplifier or, better yet, a Shield Capacitor. The Capacitor pops shield strength back to 100 percent. Be frugal though. Each use of a Shield Capacitor features a 10 percent chance of total shield failure.

If you're in a tank, which has no shields, take a Turbine Booster for quick escapes to Repair pads when your armor is seriously degraded.



One other important shield tip: When selecting a shield generator for your rig, remember that the Charge and Efficiency rates are just as important as the overall Protection Factor. "Protection Factor" simply measures the maximum amount of shield energy your generator can store. Faster charge and better efficiency can easily offset a lower amount of overall storage.

Use a Shield Capacitor only when your shields are very low.

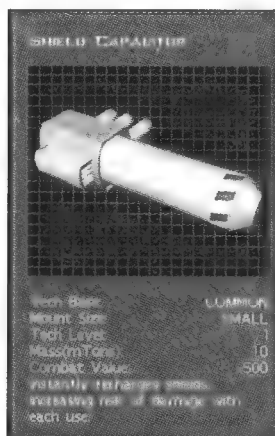
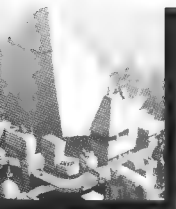
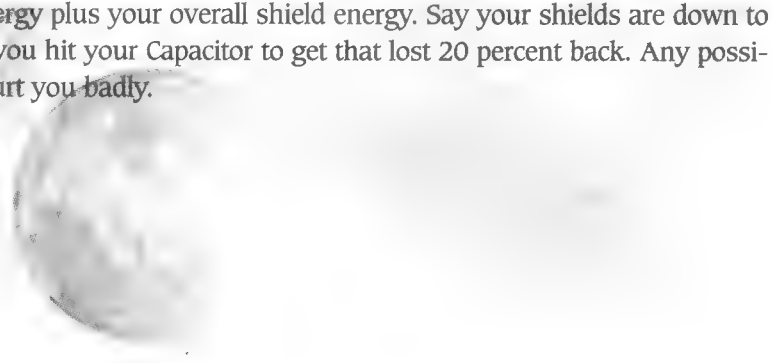


Fig. 7-14.

Be frugal with a Shield Capacitor. It will blow eventually, leaving you hurt and without shields.



Each time you use the Capacitor to re-juice your shields, there's a 10 percent chance both it and your shields will explode. When that happens, the damage inflicted on your vehicle equals the Capacitor's energy plus your overall shield energy. Say your shields are down to 80 percent capacity, and you hit your Capacitor to get that lost 20 percent back. Any possible explosion will then hurt you badly.



FastCharge shields are ideal for melee combat.



Fig. 7-15.

A FastCharge shield generator offers less protection, but fast shield recovery and excellent efficiency. Both are crucial for multiplayer dogfights.

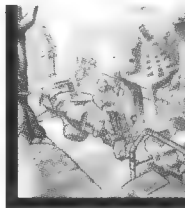
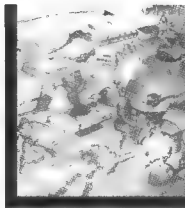
Big shields are good things. But in a wild multiplayer dogfight, the hits just keep on coming, and shields go down quickly. The FastCharge shield generator offers medium protection but quick regeneration (50/sec). So it's often better than, say, a Titan shield generator with a higher overall Protection Factor but only a 35/sec charge rate. FastCharge shields also feature the second-highest shield efficiency rating (2.5) in the game. That means they absorb more damage per unit of shield energy than other shield generators.

TEAM DEATH MATCH TIPS

As you might expect, a Team Death Match is an entirely different experience from the standard Death Match. Recheck the Capture the Flag section earlier in this chapter; many of those tips apply to Team Death Match as well. Here are a few other bits of wisdom culled from much gameplay and the *Starsiege* testing experts.

Thrash their bases.

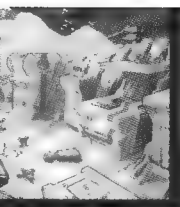
In a Team Death Match, it's very important to annihilate your enemy's base. In particular, nail the Repair and Reload power generators. They'll still work, but at a much reduced rate of speed. The longer your opponents must squat to heal or reload, the better.





Don't go out alone.

No matter how good a pilot you are or how loaded your vehicle is, don't go wandering the map by yourself! Travel in hunter/killer teams. As one Dynamix tester put it, "A pack of hyenas will always kill a lion."



Send a guinea pig.

Here's an exception to the previous tip. The most important task early in Team Death Match is to locate the enemy and get some idea of how its forces are arrayed. Is the biggest threat coming up the left or right flank? Is the enemy sitting on high ground, waiting for you to advance first? Where is its biggest concentration of force?

If your team opens a match encamped in a city base, send a speedy scout with long-range sensors across surrounding open space. Hit **(ENTER)** to access your satellite map and watch what pops up. When the scout draws fire, watch carefully to see where the enemy seems most concentrated.



Be sure your team builds complementary vehicles.

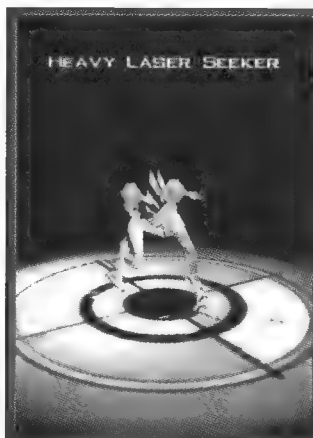


Fig. 7-16.

**Complementary Seekers
make good hunter/killer teammates.**



Big Hercs can carry a nice mix of weapons. Although, in Team Death Match, you should distribute complementary types of weapons amongst teammates. For example, one pair of Dynamix testers works together by outfitting two very fast Seekers. One carries Heavy Lasers for anti-shield work, and the other carries twin racks of Shrike missiles to punch through armor.

"Seekers are incredibly quick, so we just pick a big, slow target and circle with impunity," says one. "I snipe away with my lasers, dogfighting until the target's shields are low. Then I signal my partner to dump in the missiles."

As long as you keep dodging and moving, it's a killer combination.

Get numbers on your side.

The goal of Team Death Match is to rack up kills. And the best way to get kills is to form squads or packs, then maneuver into situations where you outnumber and/or outgun the enemy. "The idea is to set up three-versus-one or two-versus-one engagements," says designer Dave Selle.

Concentrate your fire.

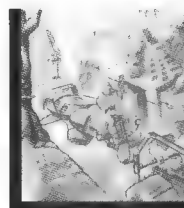
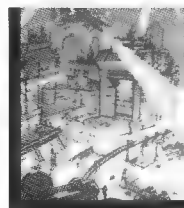
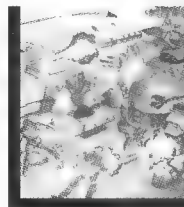


Fig. 7-17.

Your entire pack should focus all guns on one target at a time. But keep moving!

In team warfare, you get the best results from focusing your massed fire on individual opponents. Imagine you're running across a landscape in a pack of three, and you suddenly encounter an enemy pack of three. You could square off in three one-on-one dogfights. However, this is not the most effective way for packs to tangle.

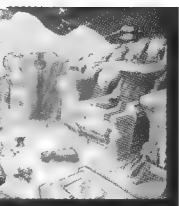
Instead, direct your squad's fire on enemies one at a time. Keep your team circling the prey. Don't stand still, or the other "ignored" enemies will eat you alive. Also, beware of enemies using the same tactic on you. If you find yourself the target of an enemy pack's concentrated fire, it's time to run. Use a Turbine or Rocket boost if you've got one.





Focus your pack's fire on the other pack's "finger of death."

Concentrate fire on the most dangerous enemy first. If your pack faces a couple of Goads and an Executioner with four Particle Beam Weapons, maim the Executioner first. Hit him fast, hit him hard, and hit him with every gun in your party. The Goads may hurt you a bit as you ignore them, but it's better to take a few hits from medium mount guns than absorb one of the Executioner's fearsome broadsides.



If your team concentrates fire, agree to target a single component.

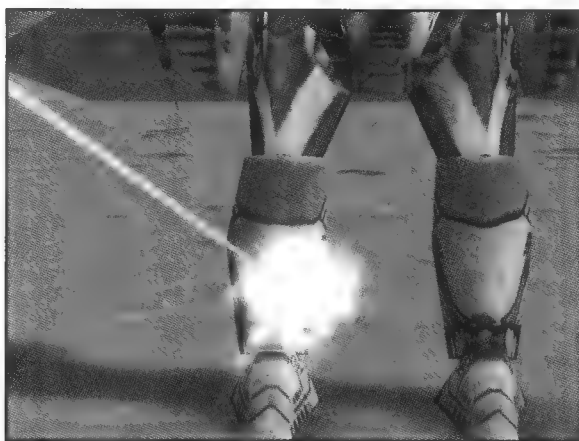


Fig. 7-18.

If everybody in your squad aims for the same enemy leg, targets die in a most expeditious manner.



This tip is for good marksmen only. Before a skirmish, all squadmates should agree to target a specific component of each enemy you've singled out. Herc legs and tank turrets are particularly vulnerable components. Of course, *any* hit on an enemy is good. But the more shots you put in one place, the faster your opponent goes down.



Missile boats make good base defenders, particularly in bases with turrets.

Laser turrets guard many of the bases in the various multiplayer missions. Big Lasers in gun turrets are very good at quickly taking down attackers' shields. To complement this capability, arm some of your base guard contingent with ballistic weapons to penetrate armor. Missiles, in particular, have good range and punch. If you run out of missiles, your Reload pad is right there at your base.

"Be sure to use a good mix of heat-seeker and radar-guided missiles," says a tester. "This forces your opponent to use both Thermal and ECM jammers." This precludes enemies from adding shield-enhancing components. Their shields will go down faster when your side's gunboats or base turrets open up on them.

Base guards should have plenty of long-range weapons.



Fig. 7-19.

Guard your base with heavyweights bristling with long-range, hard-hitting guns like the Particle Beam Weapon. This Executioner sports four of the big suckers.

A favorite base defender is the Executioner decked out with Particle Beam Weapons. If the terrain before you is open, this rig can pick off incoming marauders at a good distance. Olympians with multiple missile racks make good base guards, too. “The Olympian’s a real barge,” says one Dynamix tester. “But plant it on a hilltop, and you can just lob flights of missiles at base attackers.”

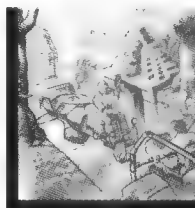
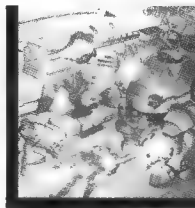
Cloaking your big missile boat is a good tactic too. Get your missile lock and let fly; your targets won’t know what’s up until the first volley hits.

Attack over open ground with speed, Cloaks, and jammers.

Sometimes you have no choice but to launch a base assault over open ground. Expect enemy defenders to launch plenty of missiles. Therefore, you’d better carry at least one type of jammer—both if possible. Cloaks can help you slip into range with your guns before the base garrison can launch missiles or open fire with other long-range weapons.

But your best open-ground assault weapon is simply raw speed. The faster your vehicle, the easier it is to juke out of missile trajectories.

“Goads probably offer the best platform for combined agility and firepower,” suggests one tester. “Talons are good too, but they have smaller shield capability.” A loaded Goad can sprint in at around 140 kph. And it can unload on a target with a powerful pair of guns hung on its medium weapon mounts. Add a Turbo or Rocket boost, and you’re looking at a sturdy sprinter that can burst away at more than 250 kph.





Kill your enemy's Repair and Reload power generators.

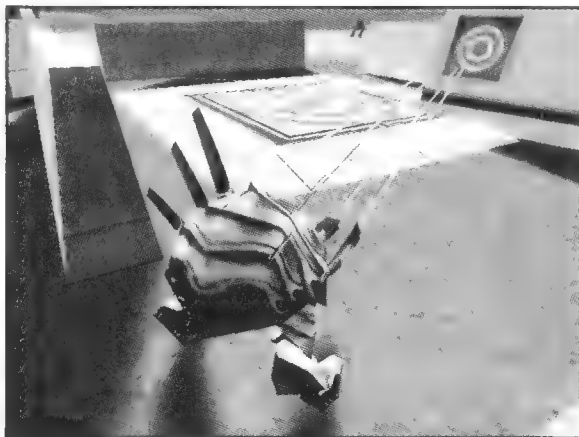


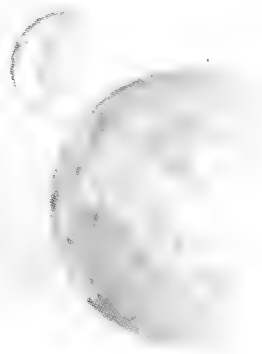
Fig. 7-20.

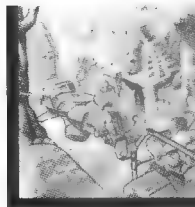
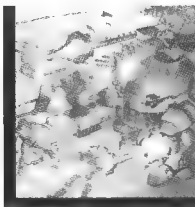
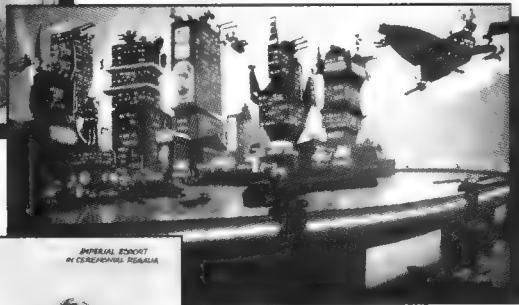
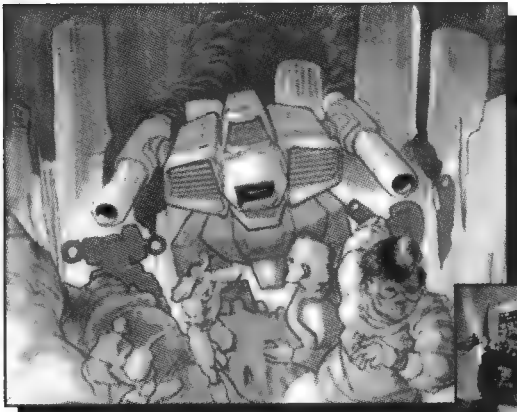
That Reload pad bull's-eye in the enemy base just screams "Shoot me!" doesn't it?

Sure, deliberately targeting your opponents' Repair and Reload power generators is a despicable tactic. But as one Dynamix tester puts it, "It's incredibly underhanded. I do it all the time."

Everybody does it all the time, and without compunction. This is war, right? A shattered Repair or Reload pad still functions, but only at 50 percent the normal speed. That extra time is usually lethal in a hot and heavy multiplayer squabble. And here's an even more despicable tactic. Destroy the pad when someone's sitting on it. Or better yet, fire at the pad's power generator until it's red, but save the kill shots until an enemy approaches for a refreshing heal session. Repair pad generators blow up with a nice, big blast radius.

That's low. But it's beautiful, man.







Part Three

THE HUMAN MISSIONS

As Elton John once sang, "Mars ain't the kind of place to raise your kids." This is particularly true of 29th century Mars. Though partially terraformed with a breathable atmosphere, colonial Mars is still little more than a high desert dustbowl. In 2829, it's also a place of great turmoil—wildcat strikes, smuggling, piracy, and outright rebellion. Yes, Mars is a hell of a place to live, but you're still proud to be a "duster."

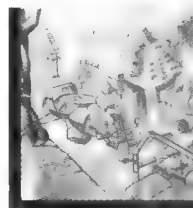
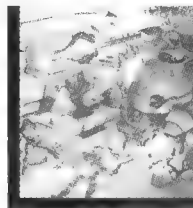
The first of the Human Campaigns is set on Mars, a seven-mission "starter set" that introduces you to the mechanics and tactics of Herc piloting. It pits you against the relatively weak Imperial Police (or "Imp Lice") forces on Mars. The second campaign offers stiffer competition as Caanon Weathers and his elite Imperial Knights arrive to quell your pesky rebellion. In the remaining three Human campaigns, you forge a fragile alliance against Prometheus and the coldhearted savagery of his Cybrid hordes. Your struggle carries you to Venus, Titan, and eventually Pluto for a climactic confrontation.

THE YOKE OFFENSIVE

Chapter 8

As the Human campaign begins, the Martian “dusters” are in full revolt against the Empire. The revolt is focused on the Empire’s hated law enforcement units on Mars, the Imperial Police (or “Imp Lice”). In the past, the Martian resistance has relied on guerrilla tactics. However, now the Rebels have discovered advanced “alien cache” weapons in ancient Martian tunnels, and former Imperial Knight Harabec Weathers (now “Bek Storm”) has defected. These factors have turned the tide. The once-ragged Rebel corps now has a decided advantage in both leadership and firepower.

Suddenly, the Imperial Police are on the run. Time to toss off the yoke of oppression, duster.





MISSION: VULTURE DUTY

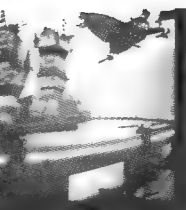
Planet: Mars

Location: Mole Deep



This starter mission is a cakewalk. But some of you are newbies, so don't feel bad if you fail. Just be advised that most gamers could complete this mission driving a Camry.

OK, there are *some* challenges. First, you're riding solo on a 40-ton Outrider Emancipator with nobody watching your back. Plus, after you complete your primary and secondary objectives, you can go looking for trouble. (Believe me, it's there. *Big* trouble.) But overall, this mission is as easy and straightforward as it gets in the *Starsiege* single-player campaign.



Enemies

- ★ 1 Cargo Ship
- ★ 1 Basilisk
- ★ 1 Talon
- ★ 3 Minotaurs (optional)



Recommended Rig Setup

As mentioned, your only vehicle option is the Outrider Emancipator. The default weaponry (twin Blasters from the alien cache) kicks butt, but the default internals (LTADS and ECM Jammer) are utterly useless in this mission. Remove them and add a Shield Modulator. You fight a pair of one-on-one duels in "Vulture Duty," so the Modulator comes in handy. (More on this in the mission walkthrough.) Finally, upgrade your computer suite to Advanced and your sensors to Standard.

Mission Walkthrough

Exit the access tunnel and swing left, heading north up the ravine. Follow the cut to the wrecked structure. Target the box inside the structure and press [I] to scan the target. You learn it's a weapon container. When you identify the box, the game adds a batch of weapons to your arsenal for future missions.

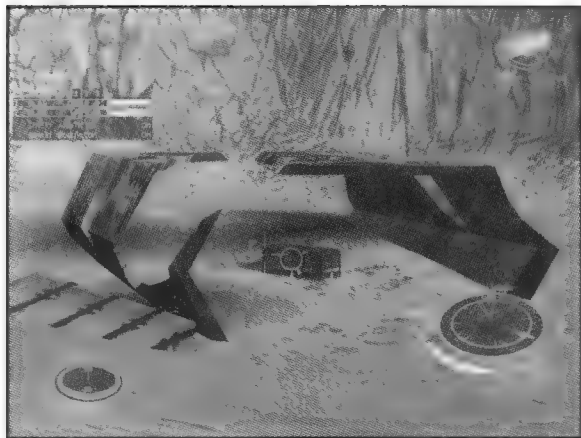


Fig. 8-1.
ID that box in the wrecked structure to gain
weaponry for future missions.

Continue north past the wreckage to Nav Alpha, where the Imperial Police cargo ship sits like a winged duck. A lone Basilisk protects the craft. He looks tough, but he has no shields. So he's quite vulnerable to your Blaster fire.

Target the Basilisk, but before you attack, press **(PAGE UP)** several times to shift shield energy forward. Then press **(INS)** to activate the shield's auto-rotation. The Shield Modulator you installed will automatically rotate the thickened part of the shield toward whatever your computer has targeted—in this case, the Basilisk. Neat, eh?

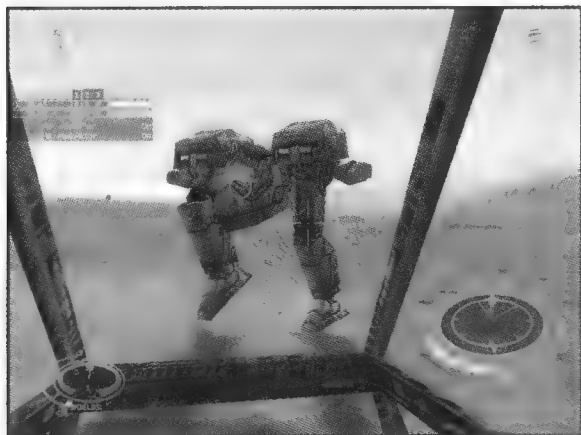
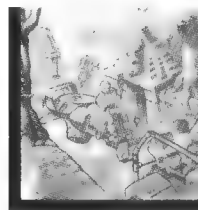
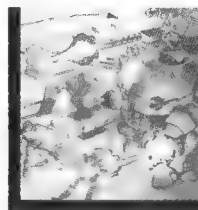


Fig. 8-2.
Your first Human campaign battle isn't too tough.
This Basilisk has no shields!

True warriors will hit the big, bad Basilisk head on. He has big guns, but so do you. And unlike him, you have shields too. Zigzag your approach, turn on his tail, and take him out.

When the Basilisk is dead, put the Imp cargo ship out of its misery.





NOTE

Your Outrider Emancipator is faster than the Basilisk. So you *could* just target the Imperial cargo ship, knock it out quickly, and skitter home to safety.

You will have accomplished both primary mission objectives without fighting the Basilisk. But you won't feel very good about yourself.

Do it quickly. The Basilisk's death triggers the approach of a Talon scout from the north. Talons are quick, annoying little Hercs. But like the Basilisk, this one has no shields. To complete your secondary mission objective, destroy the speedy enemy. Two or three hits will suffice.

Now make your final sprint to Nav Bravo.

NOTE

Optional: Hardy warriors who relish near-impossible odds can destroy the Talon and then linger until the Imperial recovery convoy arrives. This convoy includes three brutal Minotaurs, each bristling with big guns. If you can take them out, you are a true StarSliege god.

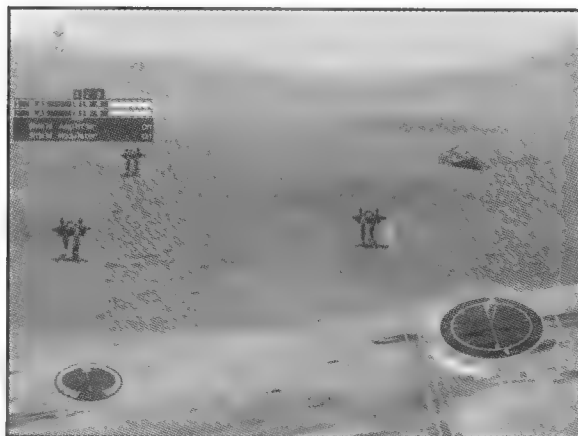


Fig. 8-3.

Uh oh, here comes the recovery convoy. You can't beat three tough Minotaurs yet. *Run away!*

MISSION: FLASHBURN

Planet: Mars

Location: Syrtis Mountains

Here's your first taste of teamwork, and your first partner isn't half bad—General Bek Storm, death incarnate, the hottest Herc pilot this side of Pluto. As he points out in his briefing, this mission is strictly hit and run. But as in Vulture Duty, you can choose to tarry and engage Imperial reinforcements that arrive after you complete your primary objective.

Enemies

- ★ 1 Banshee
- ★ 1 Terran Minotaur Cargo
- ★ 1 Terran Big Ammo Cargo
- ★ 4 Basilisks
- ★ 3 Talons
- ★ 2 Minotaurs

Recommended Rig Setup

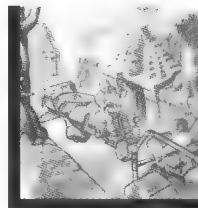
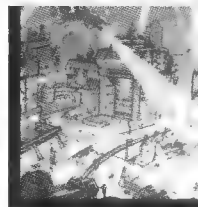
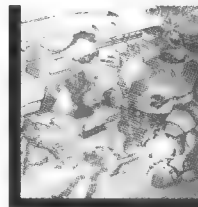
MFAC time! Put one of these big whoppers on Mount 1 and add a shield-busting EMP on Mount 2. The FastCharge shield generator is also highly recommended. It's a beauty.

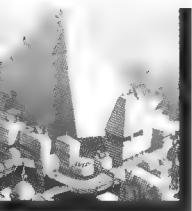
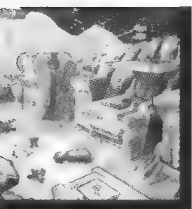
Now you're probably overweight. Dump your Shield Modulator; shield rotation won't help against the Imp swarms in this mission. Replace it with a Battery to increase your energy pool for the power-gobbling MFAC, but leave the other special slot empty for now. Go with the Ultralight Sensor, CARLAM armor, and a Medium Reactor. Don't worry about the big energy deficit.

Mission Walkthrough

Follow Bek and Mary to the Imperial convoy, which consists of two big cargo carriers and an escort of four Basilisks. Hit the cargo carriers first—they go down fast, especially with MFAC fire. Then join your partners in the Basilisk melee.

Mary's a swell gal, but remember one of your primary objectives: *Bek must survive*. Weave around behind him, hitting his targets and watching his six. Let Mary fend for herself. (Don't worry, she'll do fine.)





TIP

OK, here's the real scoop. Bek is essentially invincible in this mission. He does not need your protection. Your true objective, then, is to survive and get a few kills to boost your reputation. Go ahead, mix it up with the Imps... but if you get hurt, keep back and let Bek do the dirty work.

When the last Basilisk dies, Bek and Mary head directly for Nav Bravo. But are you finished? Hit **(F12)** to learn that your secondary objective is still active. More Imp Lice are out there, up north. The mission program works like this: When your team reduced the Imperial convoy to one remaining vehicle, you triggered the approach of three Talons and two Minotaurs from the far north. The Talons are closer and faster, so they'll arrive first, but Bek and Mary don't know this yet, so they continue running for the tunnel.

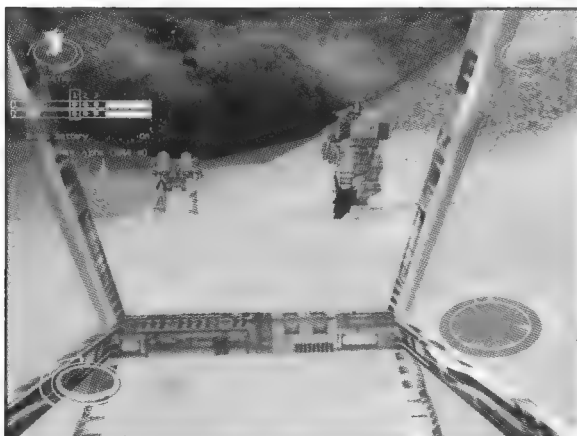


Fig. 8-4.

Where are you going, guys? Bek and Mary run to Nav Bravo after crushing the convoy, but two more Imp squads lurk nearby—one north and one east.

We suggest you follow them toward Nav Bravo. On the way, an Imperial flyer will spot you and direct reinforcements to your position. (As mentioned, these forces are already coming.) When you approach Nav Bravo, keep at least 200 meters away from it to avoid triggering the "Mission Accomplished" window. Bek and Mary stop outside the tunnel entrance. Veer up the hill, turn north, and wait.



Fig. 8-5.

Wait at Nav Bravo. These three Talons swoop up from the north, followed by a pair of Minotaurs from the east.

When the Talons arrive, go get 'em. Bek and Mary join the fray. Talons, of course, are more nimble but less powerful than Basilisks. Do some Talon chasing with your speedy Emancipator. You can rack up a few good kills on your own.

After the Talons are scrap, continue to keep your distance from Nav Bravo. Turn north-east and wait. (If Bek and Mary head north, follow them. Sometimes they do, sometimes not.) Two tough Minotaurs soon rumble over the hill. Engage the lumbering Imperial bastards. These Imps are tough. So keep an eye on your status display and, if you take red-level damage, run away or hide behind Bek.

MISSION: STEALING THUNDER

Planet: Mars

Location: Old Barsoom

Your first two missions featured quick-hit tactics followed by a run to a nearby Rebel access tunnel. This time is different. First, you and Bek Storm must strike a lightly guarded Imperial depot. You must then cripple a Sky-mule class cargo-hauler loaded with artillery, *without destroying it*. Finally, you need to secure the base for a Rebel recovery team.

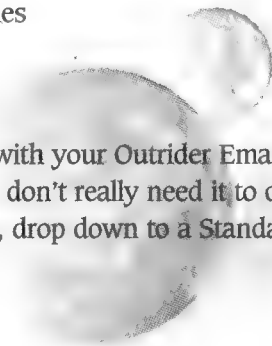
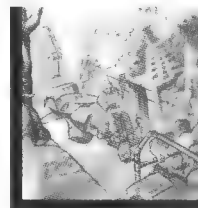
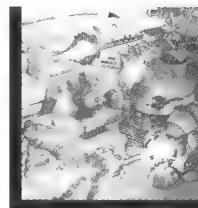
Your Mission Briefing's tactical addendum recommends a Cloak, so by all means add one to your vehicle.

Enemies

- ★ Imperial Cargo Ship
- ★ 4 Talons
- ★ 2 Basilisks
- ★ Various Imperial cargo/support vehicles

Recommended Rig Setup

An Avenger tank is now available, but stick with your Outrider Emancipator. Add the Chameleon Cloak for stealth if you want. You don't really need it to complete the mission, but give it a try. To balance the added weight, drop down to a Standard Reactor.





Mission Walkthrough

NOTE

You can rush forward and engage the Basilisks if you want. If you do, Bek attacks them too. But if you take too long, you'll miss the cargo shuttle.

Follow Bek through the narrow canyon. Two Imperial Basilisks patrol just beyond the north end of the canyon. When Bek spots them and gives the word, halt and hit **CTRL** + **X** to activate your Cloak. Then sit tight until Bek gives the word to proceed.

After the patrol passes, de-cloak and continue directly to Nav Alpha. Don't follow Bek! He veers left to tangle with the base garrison of Talons. Your job: Head straight to the Imperial cargo transport sitting on the landing pad. Then knock two of its four corner-mounted thrusters off—quickly, before it lifts off and escapes.

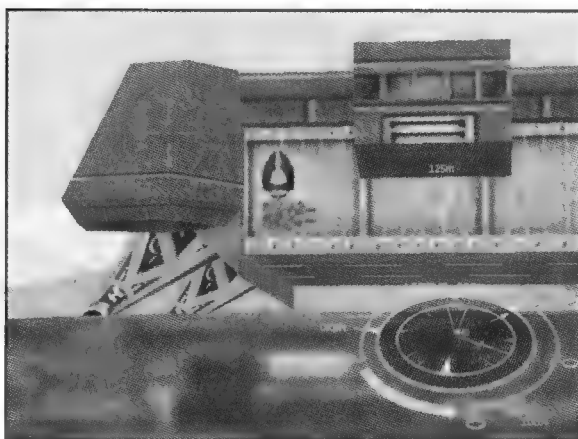


Fig. 8-6.

Knock only two thrusters off the corners of the Imperial cargo ship. You want to disable it, not kill it. But hurry. It will fly away eventually.

Descend the ridge into the base and target the transport, which sits atop a landing pad. As you approach, use your Zoom (press **Z**) to target the thrusters and cleanly pick two off. (Again, the transport has four thrusters, one on each corner.) Aim carefully! If you destroy the transport, you fail the mission.

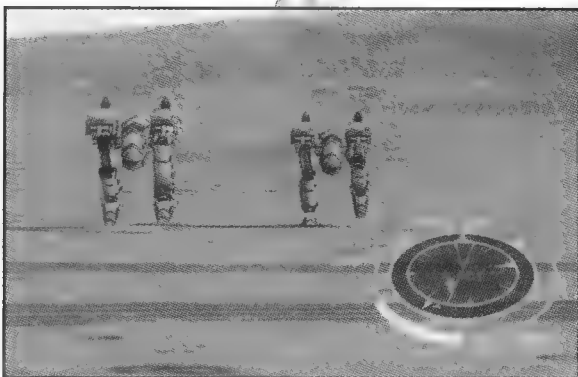


Fig. 8-7.

The Basilisk patrol you evaded earlier now swoops in with a vengeance.

The two Basilisks you evaded earlier will swoop in from the base perimeter. At this point in the campaign, Bek is a far better fighter than you are. So head east across the depot to link up with him. Let him slug it out with the Basilisks while you chase Talons.

When all Imperial Hercs are dust, press **[1]** to radio in the recovery team.

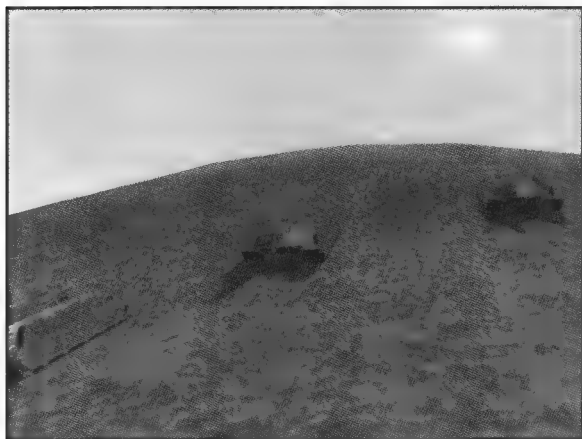


Fig. 8-8.

Radio in the recovery boys to scoop up the artillery-laden cargo ship. Good job!

MISSION: DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Planet: Mars

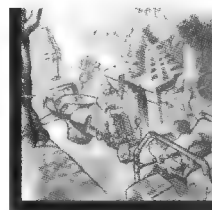
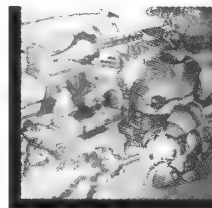
Location: Valles Marineris

Your job is to find Sergeant Sarah DiMarco's badly wounded Olympian Herc somewhere in the Valles Marineris, then escort her to safety. Best bet: Scour the valley basin clean of Imp Lice *before* you hook up with DiMarco. This minimizes the damage she might take in an engagement as you escort her to Nav Bravo.

This mission gives you control of your first squadmate. It also pits you against your first enemy missile boats. Jammer time!

Enemies

- ★ 4 Minotaurs
- ★ 1 Paladin (with missiles)
- ★ 6 Talons
- ★ 1 Basilisk (with missiles)





Recommended Rig Setup

Replace your Chameleon Cloak with the Guardian ECM Jammer; you face some missile-launchers in this mission. Leave everything else the same on your Outrider Emancipator.

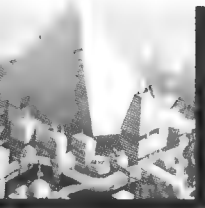
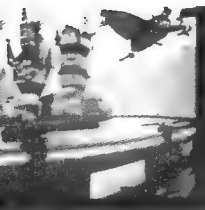
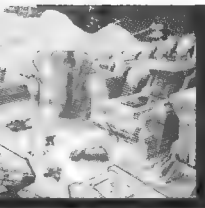


Fig. 8-9. Your first squadmate is Joakim "Sax" Saxon. Give him the Avenger with twin ELFs, and he becomes a shred-master.

NOTE

If you want more range for Saxon, swap one Elf for a Blaster. This adds 1200 meters of range and also reduces the Avenger's energy consumption. But *Starsiege* squadmates generally like to get in close, and they tend to be good at close-range fighting. Therefore, we recommend you leave both ELFs on the Avenger.

Assign the Avenger to Joe "Sax" Saxon, your new squadmate. Its default Electron Flux Whips are deadly. But with a range of 150 meters, they're for close-up work only. Fortunately, the Avenger's origin as an "agricultural transport-tractor" makes it amazingly nimble. When you concentrate your squad's fire, Saxon's twin ELFs and your MFAC will make short work of most enemies.

Once your Avenger's weapons are set, trade up to the Light Agility Engine to get full top speed. Upgrade armor to DURAC too, if possible. The vehicle should already have a Doppelganger ECM Jammer in the default configuration. Like you, Sax needs this special component to deflect the missiles in this mission.

Mission Overview

Stay away from DiMarco and tend to the enemy presence first. Don't worry—no Imperials will find DiMarco's wounded Olympian before you do. However, if you get within 200 meters of DiMarco, she reports and starts following you. She's a big, juicy target for enemies you subsequently meet.

Worse, your DiMarco contact also triggers the attack of any remaining Imperial vehicles in the valley. The first attacker comes 90 seconds after contact, with another triggered every 60 seconds. So again, the best course is to try to avoid DiMarco for as long as possible.

DiMarco starts the mission in any one of four places, so you have to watch for her yellow blip on your radar. She's not moving, so she appears on radar at 530 meters. At 200 meters, she contacts you.

Mission Walkthrough

TIP

Use your squadmate with total confidence. Saxon is an efficient pilot, and his ELFs are quite lethal. Send him after anything that moves.

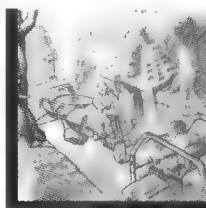
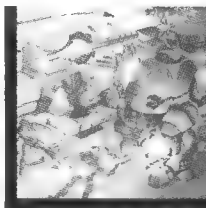
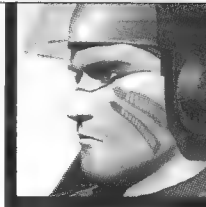
Press **CTRL** + **J** to activate your ECM Jammer. As you descend into the basin through the south "entry" canyon, you may see a Minotaur crouched ahead and to the left. Veer right, heading northeast along the right rim.

A pair of Talons hits you first, rushing from the center of the basin. Concentrate your squad's fire—that is, hit **F4** and then **1** to order Sax to attack your target. Talons go down fast if you blast them while he chews them up with ELFs.

NOTE

Keep an eye out for Sergeant DiMarco's Olympian. If you spot her on radar, stay away! If you accidentally "activate" DiMarco by getting within 200 meters of her Herc, then lead her directly for Nav Aruv.

The Minotaur you saw earlier will also lumber east to engage. Have fun slicing the beast into twitching gobbets of metal.



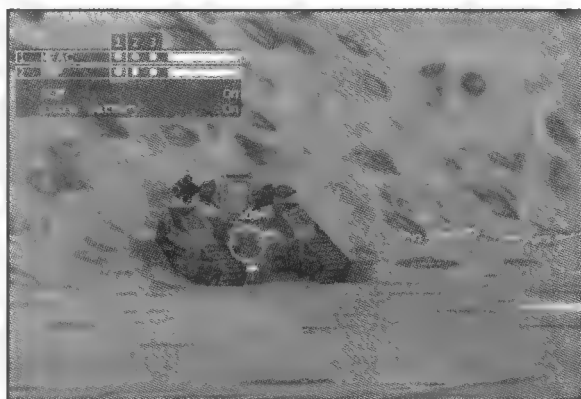
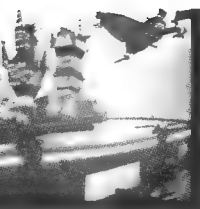
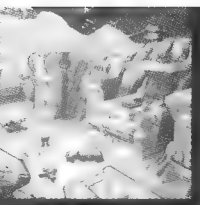


Fig. 8-10.

This Paladin is the first missile-equipped enemy you face in the campaign. Engage your ECM jammers to keep his little rockets off-target.

Continue northeast, hugging the right rim of the basin. More Talons and a Paladin tank with a deadly rack of missiles await. However, your ECM Jammer should keep the tank from launching accurate strikes. You may run into a missile-laden Basilisk as well. Remember, no matter how many enemies swarm, focus your squad fire on *one target at a time* for maximum effectiveness.

NOTE

If DiMarco is with you at this point, keep a sharp eye on her six. Don't let either of the Minotaurs go one-on-one with her. After the battle, lead her to Nav Bravo. This locks DiMarco's Olympian into a patrol pattern near the marker where she's probably safe.

Continue north along the right rim. As you follow the curve of the basin, you come to a northeast "exit" canyon leading up to Nav Bravo. Twin Imp Minotaurs wait in ambush by the nav marker. Shatter them.

Now head back south, descending into the center of the basin. At Nav Alpha, veer right toward the southwest corner of the basin. More Talons and another Minotaur may lurk nearby. Engage them, but keep alert. Check your radar for DiMarco's yellow blip.

Now you can contact DiMarco if you haven't already done so. Once you find her Olympian, head for Nav Bravo. Important: Keep your speed at about 40-50 kph. DiMarco's rig is slow and damaged, and you don't want her to fall behind. You'll find out why in a minute.

As you climb the steep canyon out of the valley, DiMarco will slow considerably. Stay behind her! One more enemy Herc patrols the area. (Although you may have faced it earlier.) Beware this rogue, missile-loaded Basilisk lurking above the east wall of the basin. If you rush ahead to Nav Bravo, it will swoop down on DiMarco and nail her with merciless

missiles. Turn and press your attack hard, keeping the Imperial engaged and away from DiMarco. Once this last enemy goes down, you're home free.

Head slowly for Nav Bravo, guiding DiMarco through the north canyon exit. As soon as her Olympian staggers to the nav marker, call in your dropship for pickup.

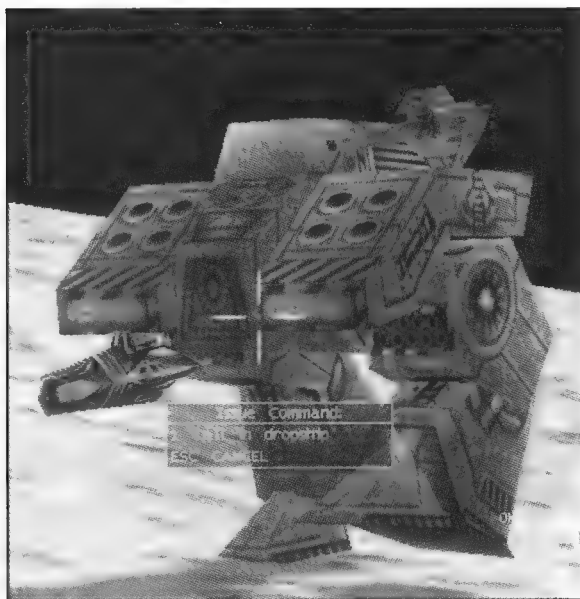


Fig. 8-11.

After you find DiMarco's Olympian, escort it directly to Nav Bravo at the north end of the valley.

MISSION: OPERATION JAILBREAK

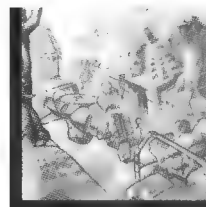
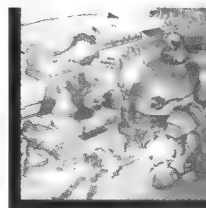
Planet: Mars

Location: Outskirts of Victoria

That Imperial artillery you helped pilfer at Old Barsoom back in "Stealing Thunder" comes in handy here. Deadly gun/missile turrets ring the Victoria base where Imperial forces have stashed the stolen Predator.

Turrets can be very bad news for Hercs. But, being stationary targets, turrets are vulnerable to a long-range artillery barrage—as long as your big guns have a spotter. And that would be you. Remember: Artillery is useless without LTADS (Laser Target Designator) to "paint the target."

You also get a second squadmate, Hunter Otobe. You'll need him for this mission. The base is heavily fortified with turrets. It also features a garrison force of eight Imp vehicles—six Hercs and two tanks.





Enemies

- ★ 2 Gun Turrets
- ★ 2 Missile Turrets
- ★ 1 Communications Tower
- ★ 2 Minotaurs
- ★ 3 Talons
- ★ 1 Basilisk
- ★ 2 Paladins

Recommended Rig Setups



Fig. 8-12.

Don't forget to add a Laser Target Designator (LTADS) to your vehicle. This mission would be very difficult without it.

You now have tech access to DiMarco's hulking Olympian. This monster is slow but features incredible firepower with six gun mounts. You don't need speed for this mission, so we recommend the Olympian rigged with LTADS to spot for your artillery.

Put your MFAC on Mount 1 and then load up the other mounts. Remember to install a good mix of shield and armor killers. At least a couple of Blasters are recommended.

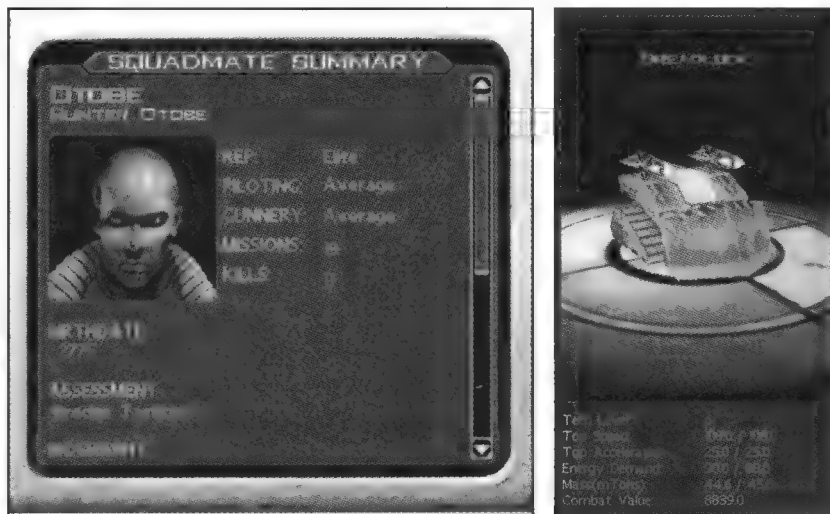


Fig. 8-13.
Hunter Otohe is an elite pilot. Put him in the deadly Dreadlock with its twin Heavy Blasters.

Keep Joe Saxon in his Avenger. Then give your elite new teammate, Hunter Otohe, the Dreadlock. Dump its Chameleon Cloak—Otohe won't need it—and add some ECM Jammers. Upgrade the armor to DURAC. Leave the pair of Heavy Blasters mounted. This adds considerable firepower to your unit.

Mission Overview

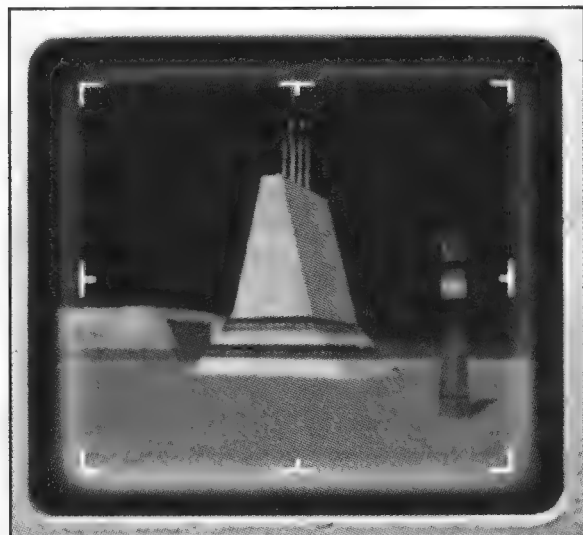
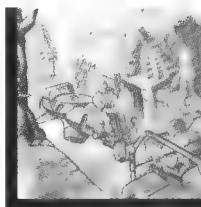
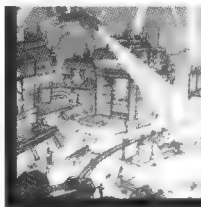
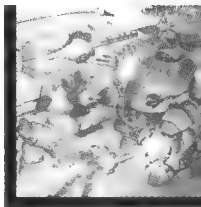


Fig. 8-14.
Use LTADS to make this Communications Tower your first or second artillery target.





This mission asks you to use LTADS to spot targets for your artillery. Four turrets ring the Imperial base, but your most important early target is the Communications Tower. Spot and destroy it either first or second. Otherwise, the tower calls in reinforcements—two Paladin tanks—that begin firing at base hangars. This is bad because one of the hangars houses the Predator grav-tank you seek to recover.



Mission Walkthrough

Lumber up to Nav Alpha. Then creep forward until you make visual contact with the two nearest (southernmost) perimeter turrets. Your LTADS should be active. Target the near right missile turret and press **[S]** to spot for artillery. When the turret blows sky high, immediately target the Communications Tower and press **[S]** again.

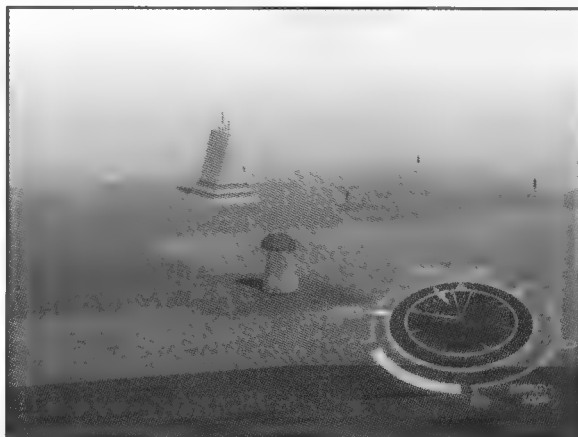
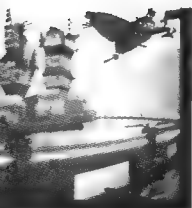


Fig. 8-15.

This is Zoom view from atop the ridge. Here are the first two targets you should spot for your artillery—the missile turret and the Communications Tower.

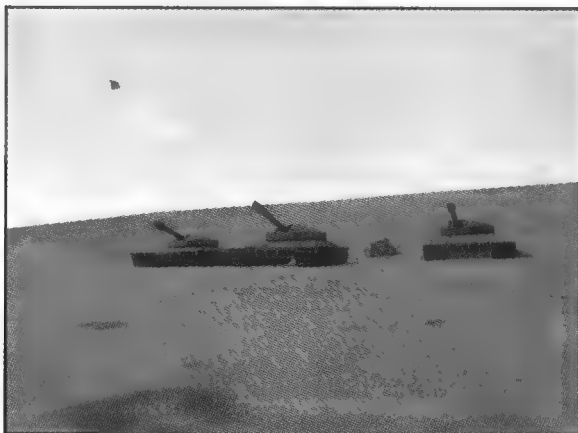


Fig. 8-16.

Target the missile turret and press **[S]** to spot for your big guns.

Note

Again, if the first two Imperial base structures are destroyed and one is *not* the Communications Tower, two Paladins shoot the final turret.

Of course, this bombardment tips off the Imp base defense units. Soon, a patrol of two Minotaurs sneaks up behind you from the southwest. If they hit you before the artillery finishes the Communications Tower, target the Minotaurs and help your team destroy them. The Comm Tower can wait; it's not going anywhere.

Once the Minotaurs are eviscerated, turn back to the base. From atop the ridge, finish spotting the Comm Tower if necessary. Then spot the other close turret (the one on the left). As

you do this, three Imperial Talons and a Basilisk from the base garrison will climb the hill to attack. As before, break your target lock on any artillery target and focus your attention on the attackers. Don't worry, you're out of turret range. After you defeat the attackers, target and spot the two far (northern) turrets for your artillery.

When the final turret goes up in smoke, you're home free... unless you neglected to make the Communications Tower your first or second artillery target. In that case, a pair of Paladins tries to rip up the hangars. Run down into the base and nail them before they hit the garage where the Predator is housed.

When all mission objectives are met, radio in the recovery ship.

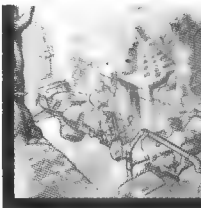
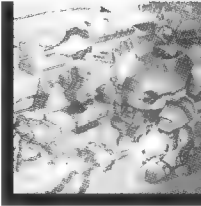
MISSION: UNDER THE GUN

Planet: Mars

Location: Tharsis City

In war, missions sometimes take unexpected turns. In the last mission (Operation Jail-break), you directed a brutal artillery barrage onto Imperial targets. In this one, you get to experience the reverse. Security Director Navarre lures you into Tharsis City to liberate refugees hiding in a "safehouse." It's a trap!

Some safehouse. This mission is your first chance to experience an operation gone horribly wrong. New mission objectives suddenly emerge in the heat of battle.





Enemies

- ★ 1 Minotaur
- ★ 4 Paladins
- ★ 2 Talons



Recommended Rig Setup



Fig. 8-17.

OK, maybe it says "Harabec's Predator."
But this baby's all yours now.



Unlike the last mission (Operation Jailbreak), this one puts a premium on speed. The Predator gives you a killer combination of speed and power. By all means, dump the Olympian and hop aboard the new grav-tank. With two Heavy Blasters and a top speed of nearly 130, this is the lift for you. Be sure you have an Advanced Computer. You must do some ID scanning, and the better computer gives you greater scan range. Add an ECM jammer and a Turbine Booster, too.

Make sure your squadmates, Sax and Otohe, have jammers too. You'll face some Paladins with missiles in this mission.

Choose Verity Vargas as your fourth squadmate. (She's already got good aim, and she'll get better fast.) Give her the Olympian with the MFAC on Mount 1 and a good mix of other weapons.

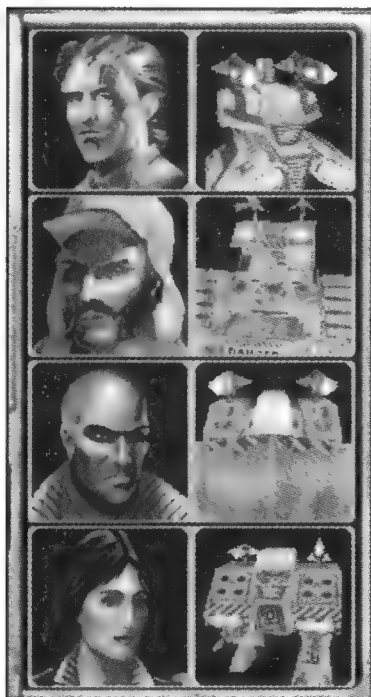


Fig. 8-18.

Pick Verity and give her the big Olympian. Now you command a fearsome foursome.

TIP

The general consensus amongst *Starsiege* experts is that big, slow Olympians are bad for you, but pretty darned good for squad-mates. Why? Because computer squadmates tend to be more accurate marksmen than you are. And the Olympian has six weapons—surely a shooter's dream.

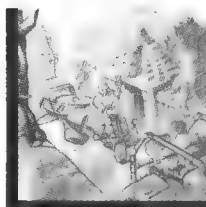
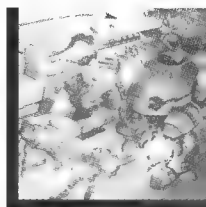
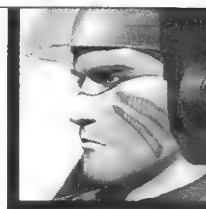
Mission Overview

There are two things to remember in this mission. First, be ready to alter your primary objective on the fly. Second, the new mission objective calls for you to defend three highly vulnerable targets—your Box Cargo convoy. You must remain aware of this convoy's progress, even while you battle Imperial units.

Welcome to the fun world of mission multitasking.

Mission Walkthrough

Float up the hill toward Tharsis City. It's important to get *well* out ahead of the convoy. To do so, fire your Turbine Booster a couple of times. This will give you more time to react. As you approach the city, quickly target and then scan (by pressing **I**) each of the five low, smaller buildings in the city. Do this until you find the Rebel safehouse. (Here's where the Advanced Computer's extended scanning range is useful.)



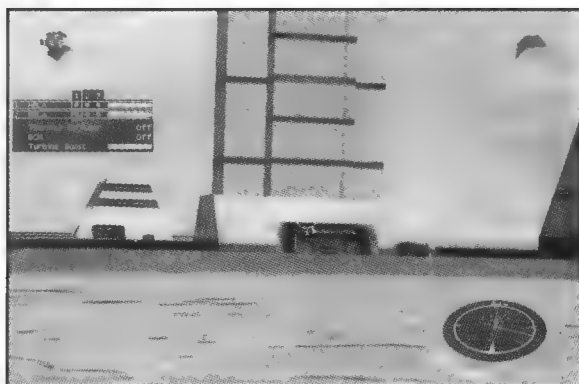
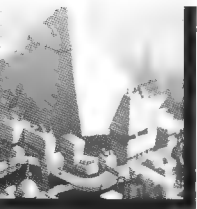
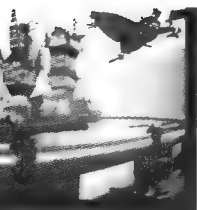
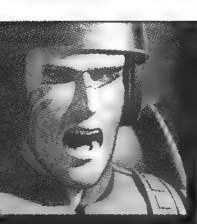


Fig. 8-19.

Scan the five smaller buildings in town until you find the Rebel safehouse. Then wave bye-bye to it.

The moment you identify the safehouse, all hell breaks loose. It's an ambush! Imperial artillery spits shells all around you. Several enemy vehicles—a Minotaur, a Paladin, and two Talons—suddenly uncloak and attack from around the city.

Now you have a new primary objective: *Get the convoy safely to Nav Bravo.*

Immediately hit **[SHIFT] + [F1]** and select **[2]** to send the convoy on to Nav Bravo. Don't have them follow you! Then target the Imps in the city and join your squad in decimating the ambush. Hit hard and fast. Your task is to wipe out the city resistance, then speed your Predator up to your Rebel Box Cargo convoy.

As you fight, pay attention to the convoy's location. If it starts climbing the hill toward Nav Bravo *before* the city battle is over, let your squad finish off the city Imps. Hustle straight up the slope to the right of the convoy.

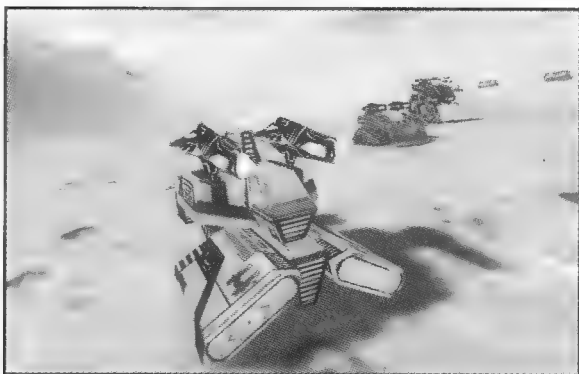


Fig. 8-20.

Quickly cleanse Tharsis City of Imperial Police. Then sprint uphill to meet the Paladin trio rolling down from the south.

You'll soon see why. Three Paladin convoy busters roll downhill from the Nav Bravo area. Activate your ECM Jammer and engage the tanks immediately to draw their missiles away from your big, vulnerable cargo convoy. Then call in your squadmates. (By now they've probably eliminated the city-based enemies.)

Key to success: If you can distract the Paladins from your convoy, the battle is won. The convoy will crawl safely to Nav Bravo while your team makes mincemeat of the Imp tanks in the squad skirmish.

Once the Paladins are eliminated, head straight to Nav Bravo. Mission successful!

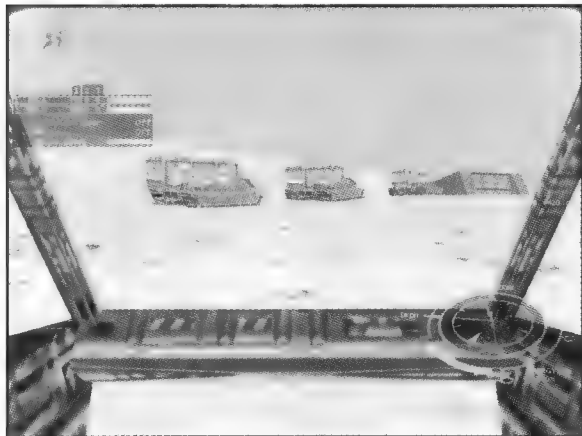


Fig. 8-21.
Get that convoy up the hill to the access tunnel at Nav Bravo!

NOTE

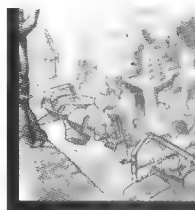
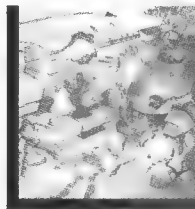
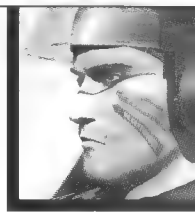
As long as just one of the three Rebel Box Cargo vehicles reaches Nav Bravo safely, the mission is counted as successful.

MISSION: BEHEADING THE SNAKE

Planet: Mars

Location: Carter Flats

This is the final mission of the Yoke Offensive campaign. In "Beheading the Snake," you finally confront the brutal Mars police chief, Ernesto Navarre. His base in Carter Flats is heavily defended, however. Fortunately, you still have that artillery you swiped at Old Barsoom, and you know how to use it. By now, you should have a crackerjack group of squadmates at your command.



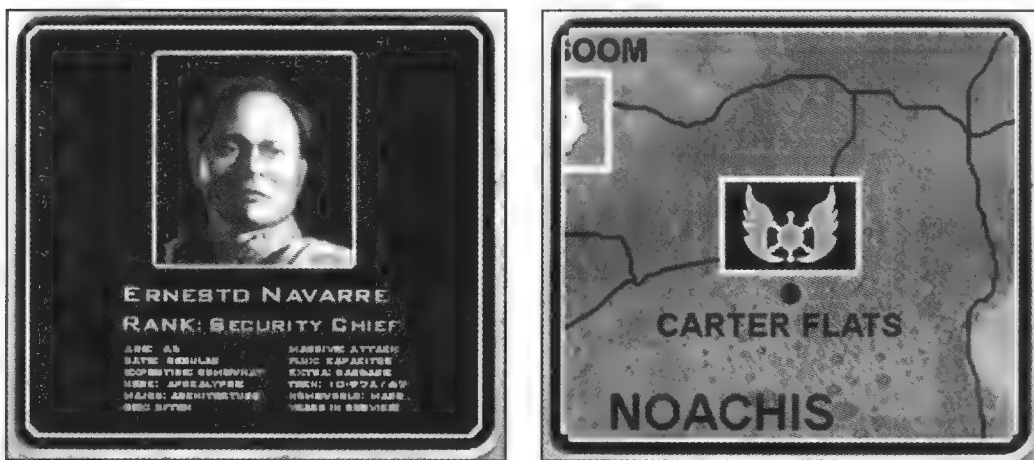


Fig. 8-22.

Imperial Security Director Navarre is holed up in his Carter Flats stronghold. Your job: Dig him out.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Southern Turrets
- ★ 2 Northern Turrets
- ★ 3 Talons
- ★ 2 Gorgons
- ★ 1 Paladin
- ★ 1 Minotaur
- ★ 1 Apocalypse
- ★ 1 Myrmidon
- ★ 1 Suppressor

Recommended Rig Setup

Outfit your Predator with LTADS for the artillery barrage. Be sure you have a good long-range sensor like the Longbow or Infiltrator—something with an active radar range of 1200 meters or more. You want the ability to monitor all enemy activity in Carter Flats from the satellite map if necessary. Plus, it makes spotting distant defense turrets with LTADS a lot easier.

Your squad should be fine as currently outfitted—unless, of course, someone lost guns or internals in the last mission. Check each squadmate's rig setup, just in case, and replace any missing components or weapons.

Mission Overview

As in Operation Jailbreak, four turrets guard this base, one at each corner of the city. However, these turrets are spread much farther apart than the ones at Victoria. So you must be more patient and methodical in spotting them for your artillery. You can't just sit in one place and nail all four.

CAUTION

A minefield of Proximity Charges has been planted around the road near the city entrance.

As mentioned earlier, Carter Flats is heavily defended by Chief Navarre's forces. Two powerful Gorgons patrol the front base entrance. Three Talons patrol the city's front perimeter, sweeping across from left to right as the mission opens. Note that these Talons have a detection radius of 750 meters. If you stay outside that radius and don't shoot them, they won't see you.

One Minotaur and one Paladin patrol the inner city. In the far right corner of Carter Flats, a Suppressor with missiles and a Minotaur with twin ELF's cruise the streets. Finally, a huge Apocalypse trolls the mid-city area. This vehicle is Navarre's personal bodyguard, and it features very good AI (artificial intelligence). In other words, it is one of your computer's better fighters.

Mission Walkthrough

Pull slightly forward, target the right southern turret, and use your LTADS to spot (by pressing [S]) for your artillery. After the first turret is destroyed, swivel left and do the same thing to the other southern turret.

TIP

Never attack turrets yourself if artillery is available to do the job.

As the second southern turret goes up in flames, a three-Talon patrol moves across in front of the city from left to right. Stay where you are! Fire at the Talons to get their attention. Then let them come to you. Why? The road near the city entrance is studded with Proximity Mines, so you don't want to fight there. Lure the Imps to your position, away from the minefield.

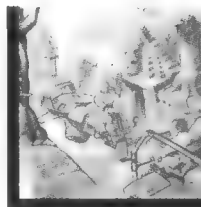
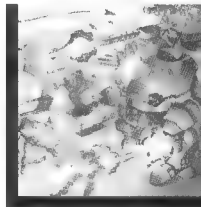
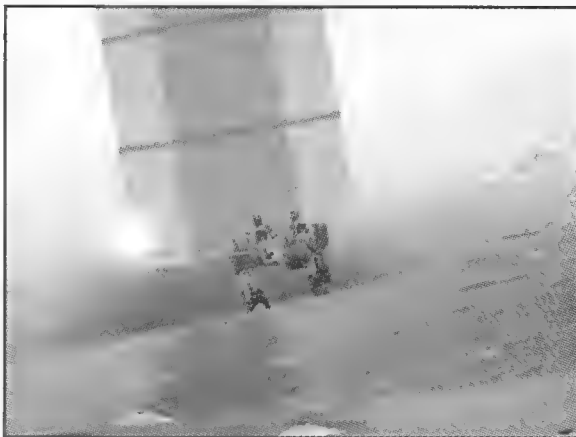




Fig. 8-23.

Attract the trio of Talons (top first, then the pair of Gorgons (bottom). Note all the Proximity Charges dotting the road into town.



Once the Talons are defeated, move a little closer (not too close) and lob some long-distance shots at the Gorgons patrolling the city entrance. Pull back to lure the Gorgons past the minefield. Then send your squad screaming in at them.

When the Gorgons go down, approach the city. Again, stay away from the main road. Instead, swing in a wide arc left or right around the minefield. Stop on the hilltop just in front of the city. From here, target the two northern turrets and spot them for your artillery. (You may need to slide along the hilltop to find them.) Try to take out both northern turrets before you enter the city. Then you won't have to worry about accidentally wandering into their range in the middle of an urban firefight.

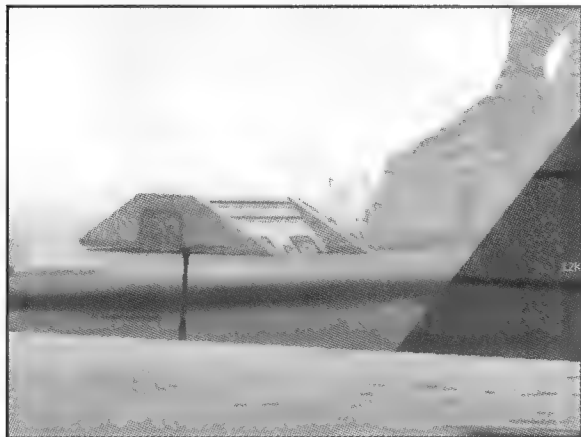


Fig. 8-24.

From this angle in front of the city, you can target the left northern turret—if you have a long-range sensor.



NOTE

Alternate approach: After you kill the Talons and Gorgons in front of the base, work around the outside of the base. Move along the ridges to the left or right to stay out of enemy range. This way you can spot all four turrets for artillery, knocking them out of commission before entering the base.

Now work your way through Carter Flats. First up is the trio patrolling the mid-city streets—a Minotaur and Paladin moving together, and an Apocalypse circling the tall center building. The ruckus soon draws the Myrmidon and the Suppressor from the back edge of the city. Your squad should be good enough to handle these defenders. However, it's wise to first concentrate fire on the Apocalypse. The sooner the big guy goes down, the better.

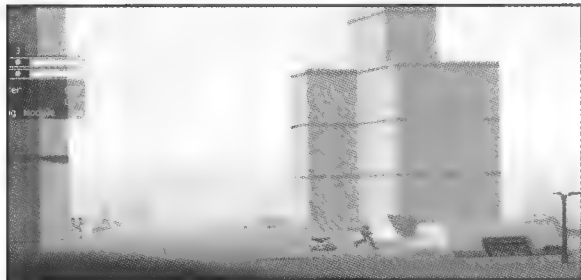
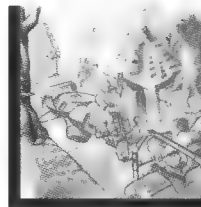


Fig. 8-25.

This Zoom view catches all five of the base defenders in one shot. The Minotaur and Paladin are near right. The Apocalypse is by the big tower at left. The Myrmidon and Suppressor are in the center toward the back of the city.



TIP

Try to attack each enemy sub-group one at a time. Don't go running wildly through the city. If particular, keep away from the back edge of the city if the two northern turrets are still active.

The mission ends when you inspect the building called "Police HQ" in the back left (northwest) part of Carter Flats. *But don't go there first!* Instead, inspect all of the other city buildings to find and add weapons and supplies to your Rebel stash. You'll find a Munitions Dump, an Imperial Weapons Cache, and a Weapons Refinery. (You'll also find a Civilian Residence and, oops, the Imperial Liquor Supply.)

Again, save the Police HQ for last. This is Navarre's headquarters. Once it's identified, it's time to celebrate.

Mars is now a free world—at least until Caanon and his Knights arrive.

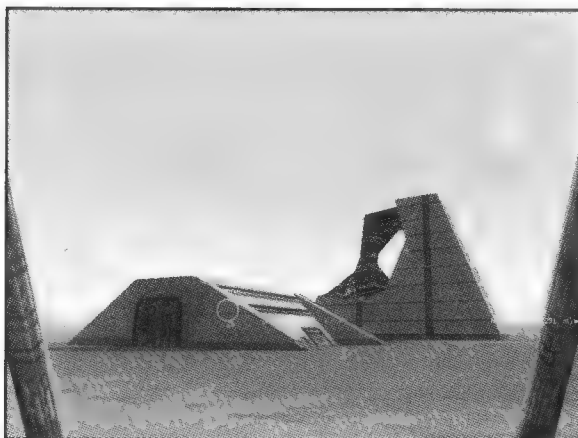


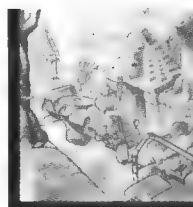
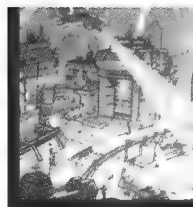
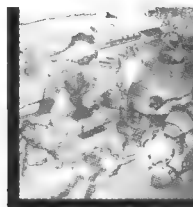
Fig. 8-26.

That "Police HQ" building at left is Navarre's headquarters. But don't scan it until you've scanned all other buildings in the base for weapons and supplies.

CAMPAIGN: IMPERIAL RETALIATION

Chapter 9

Get ready for a whole new level of competition, duster. The Knight squads in this campaign's mission three-pack are far tougher than the inept, under-equipped Imperial Police you faced in the Yoke Offensive.



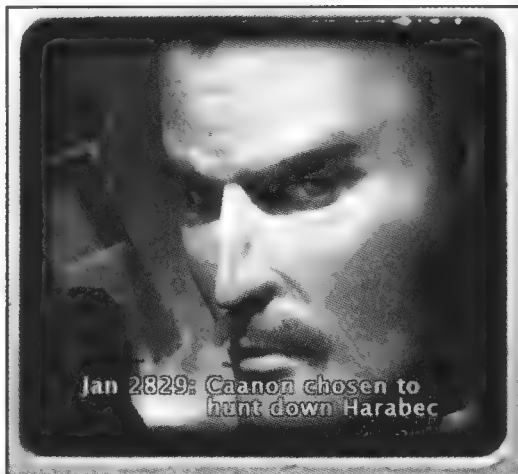


Fig. 9-1. Caanon's coming. And he's bringing his Knights.

As *Starsiege* mission guru Graeme Bayless puts it, "You can pretty much *bludgeon* your way through the Yoke Offensive. But Imperial Retaliation demands that you maneuver your vehicle nimbly and deploy your squad efficiently."

MISSION: IMPERIAL RETALIATION

This first mission is simple in concept but somewhat difficult in execution. Your job is to defend Ophir Station from attacking patrols of Imperial Knights. If you lose seven buildings, the mission is a failure. It's a classic "defend the base" exercise, with attackers rushing in on the base perimeter from random positions.

Enemies

- ★ 3 Knight's Apocalypses
- ★ 1 Knight's Minotaur
- ★ 1 Knight's Myrmidon
- ★ 2 Knight's Gorgons

Recommended Rig Setup

Replace your Predator's Heavy Blasters with the new Plasma Cannons (from that weapons cache in Carter Flats). These don't hit quite as hard as Heavy Blasters, but plasma projectiles seek targets, so you rarely miss. Plasma Cannons are quite heavy, however, so dump your Thermal Diffusion Jammer and downgrade your reactor to gain tonnage space. Keep your Turbine Booster though. You'll need to hustle across Ophir Station a few times to meet Knight attack squads.

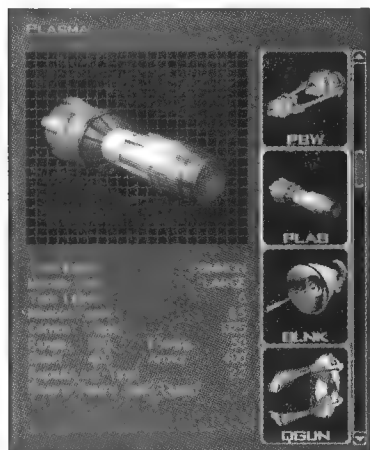


Fig. 9-2.

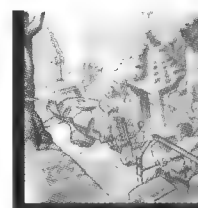
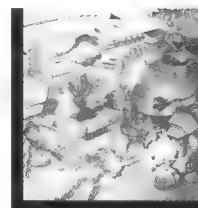
Plasma Cannons are tailor-made for your Predator tank. Plasma projectiles seek the target, leaving you freer to drive.

TIP

Plasma Cannons are particularly effective on the Predator because the grav-tank is so mobile. With seeker weapons, you can focus on piloting and forget marksmanship. Your speedy Predator can dance around and circle targets while you lob plasma in the target's general direction—and you'll hit it regularly.

Mission Walkthrough

Speed downhill to Ophir Station. On the way, open your Satellite Map and set nav points for your squadmates. Deploy one to each of the four sides of the station.



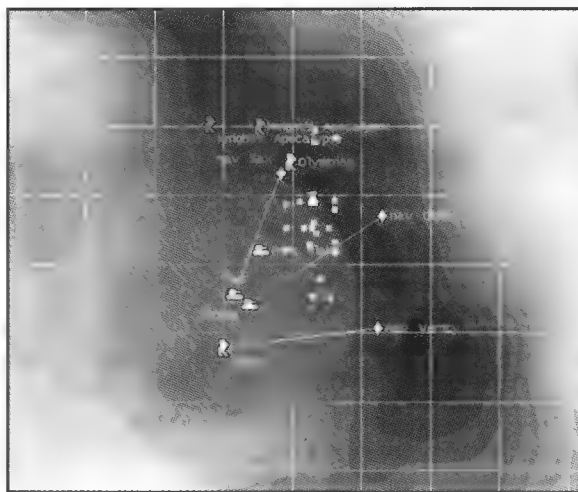


Fig. 9-3.

Immediately switch to the Satellite Map and set nav markers around the perimeter for your squadmates. Then target an approaching Knight's Apocalypse and order your whole squad to attack.

NOTE

To set a nav point, open the Satellite Map. Click first on the squadmate's icon, then on the spot where you want his/her nav marker set. Squadmates will automatically go to their assigned waypoints unless you direct them elsewhere or they are engaged in combat. Note that the "Join me" command erases all squad nav markers. So don't use it in this mission.

Why do this? During this mission, Knights attack the station from entirely random directions. With your squad deployed around the perimeter, you stand a better chance of intercepting enemy forays.

At the hill's bottom, veer to the left side of the station. The lone base defender, an Olympian, is posted there. Keeping this "friendly unit" alive is one of your secondary objectives, so consider assigning one of your squadmates to defend it.

The first enemy patrol—three Knight's Apocalypses—always attacks from this position. One Apocalypse will harass whoever intercepts it, but the other two ignore defenders and target buildings. Order a squadmate to attack the harassing Apocalypse. The Olympian base defender will tangle with him too. Then hustle with the rest of your squad to intercept the two "station-killer" Apocalypses. Hurry! They will ruthlessly chew up buildings.

After you destroy the first Knight wave, your squadmates disperse to their assigned waypoints. Soon, a second patrol, consisting of one Knight's Minotaur and one Knight's Myrmidon, attacks. These two usually hit in staggered fashion—the Minotaur first, then the tank. Direct all squadmates to hit each target as it appears. However, if they hit simultaneously, you may need to split your forces, assigning two to each target.

The third and fourth waves are each a single Knight's Gorgon that roars in from a random direction to attack station structures. Occasionally, they attack together (as seen in Fig. 9-4), but usually they hit separately. The Gorgons are heavily armed with Blast Cannons and Heavy Lasers and are easily the biggest threat so far. Concentrate your full attack on them. Be sure all four squadmates join in.



Fig. 9-4.

This pair of Knight's Gorgons may hit the base together or separately. In either case, engage them quickly because their Blast Cannons can decimate Ophir Station quickly.

NOTE

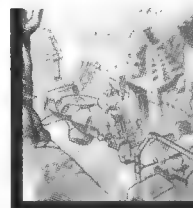
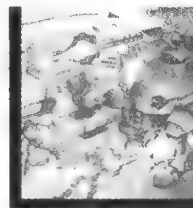
As mentioned, these final two Gorgons sometimes hit Ophir Station simultaneously. If so, split your squad, sending half after each Gorgon. Join in on the closest target. After it dies, use your Turbine Booster to jet to the second Gorgon.

MISSION: HUNTING THE ICEHAWK

This is a very *busy* mission. Things happen, vehicles scurry around, aircraft fly over, and so on. Your primary objective is actually easy to complete if you choose to ignore the secondary objectives. But what kind of unit commander would do that?

Enemies

- ★ 2 Knight's Talons
- ★ Knight's Basilisks
- ★ 2 Knight's Disruptors
- ★ 6 Knight's Drop Ships
- ★ Various Conveyors and Escape Ships
- ★ 1 Knight's Gorgon



- ★ 1 Knight's Apocalypse
- ★ 1 Missile Turret
- ★ Various Imperial Utility Trucks
- ★ Various Imperial Fuel and Ammo Cargo Vehicles

Recommended Rig Setup

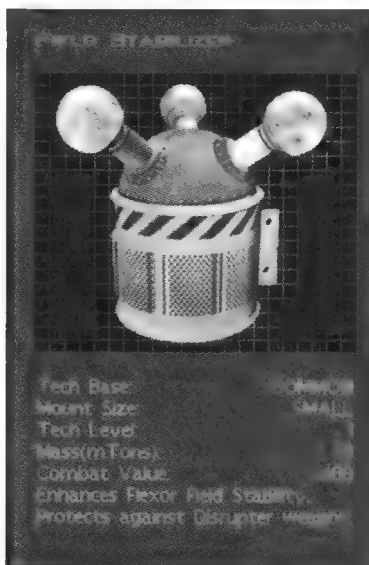


Fig. 9-5.

Add a Field Stabilizer for this mission to counter the Knight's Disruptor tanks you meet.

Dump the Turbine Booster and be sure you have an ECM Doppelganger jammer. You face several radar-guided missile attacks in this mission. (Make sure all your squadmates have Doppelgangers too.) You also face your first Disruptor tanks, so add a Field Stabilizer.

Mission Overview

Your primary objective is to secure the landing facilities at Nav Charlie. One secondary objective suggests you kill all Imperial units you find on the ground. The other secondary objective involves several Knight's Dropships that exist in this mission. To fulfill this mission objective, you must shoot down at least three of them. Don't confuse them with other flying transports such as Conveyors or Escape Ships.

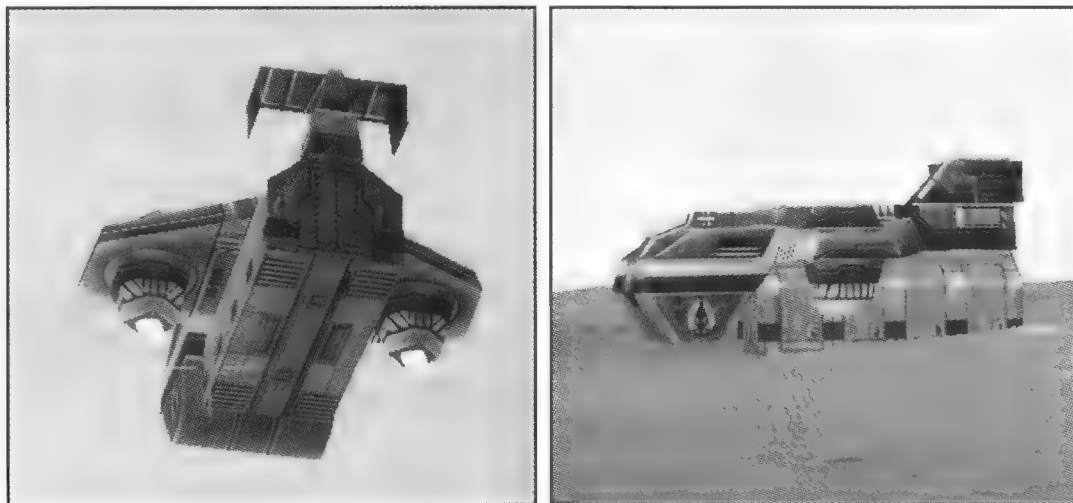


Fig. 9-6. Destroy three Knight's Dropships to complete your secondary mission objective. Some fly away, but you can catch some on the ground.

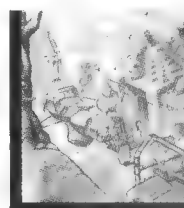
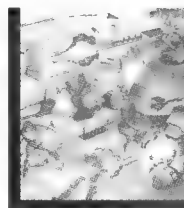
One other point: This mission is very difficult if you don't keep your squadmates with you at all times. You will encounter some tough Knight units organized in pairs. If you tangle with these yourself, you may take significant damage.

Mission Walkthrough

First, press **CTRL** + **J** to activate your ECM Doppelganger Jammer. Move forward down the canyon and hit **T** immediately to target the nearest of two Knight's Talons just around the bend. These Talons are scouts who merely harass you, then run away when you hurt them. A big Conveyor ship behind the Talons lifts off and tries to escape. As it flies overhead, concentrate your squad fire to bring it down fast, if you want. But remember, only Knight's Dropships count towards achieving your secondary objective.

Continue down the canyon. Just over the next rise, two vicious Knight's Basilisks armed with radar-guided missiles await. (If you haven't already, please activate your ECM Doppelganger Jammer now.) An Imperial Escape Ship will try to slip past overhead. Shoot it or let it go; it doesn't matter. The dropships are up ahead.

Continue down the canyon. The next challenge is a pair of Knight's Disruptor tanks that defend the canyon exit and the first Knight's Dropship beyond them. (It helps to have a Field Stabilizer to neutralize their Disruptor weapons.) Don't let them ram you! Each tank is equipped with a deadly Electrohull component that inflicts serious ramming damage.





Also, if either of the Talon scouts you fought earlier escaped, they turn and join the Disruptors here. Your full squad should handle the tanks easily.

Once the Disruptors are flamed, go hit the Knight's Dropship. (It may be flying already.) Concentrate squad fire to bring it down quickly.

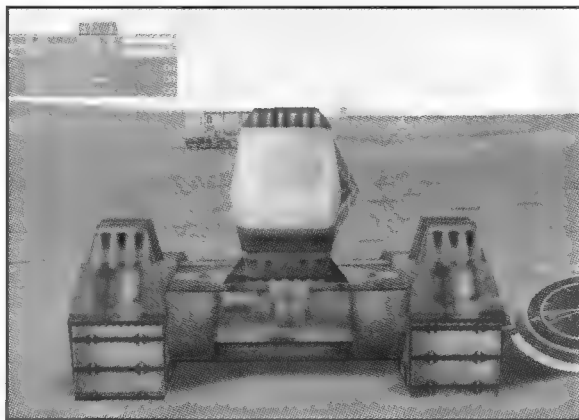


Fig. 8-7.
Don't let this happen to you! The Electrohull of this Disruptor tank will inflict major ramming damage.

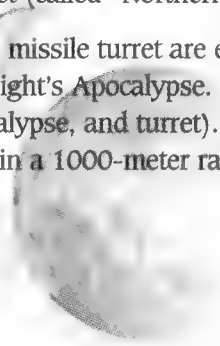


The canyon opens onto a wide plain loaded with boxes, various Terran vehicles, and two more Knight's Dropships to the left of Nav Bravo. You also come under an artillery barrage. So keep moving as you pick off the targets all around—boxes, Terran trucks, and so forth. If you stop, the artillery locks on your position, and you die most swiftly. Tip: Focus on the two Knight's Dropships. You can achieve the secondary objective here because no enemy Hercs or tanks will engage you until you approach the base.



Now comes the ugly part of the mission. The main base lies just over the ridge at Nav Charlie. Approach, but stay outside the base perimeter. A lethal Knight's Gorgon sits at the front of the base; order your squadmates to attack him. A Knight's Apocalypse lurks deeper in the base behind a building, but it won't emerge right away. So focus your own attack on the missile turret (called "Northern Turret") at the front and center of the base.

When the Gorgon and missile turret are eliminated, focus your squad's full firepower on the final defender, the Knight's Apocalypse. To win the mission, you must kill all three base defenders (Gorgon, Apocalypse, and turret). Then you must enter the base with no other enemy ground units within a 1000-meter radius.



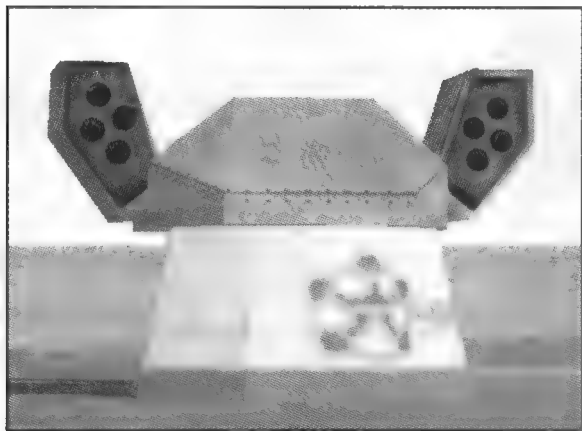


Fig. 9-8.

A Knight's Gorgon and this scary missile turret guard the front of the landing site. Advice: Send your squad after the Gorgon and take the turret yourself.

MISSION: DUST TO DUST

This final Mars mission calls for you to protect another convoy. But there are new elements as well. First, you get to use Hammertanks to clear a canyon. (The timing of your orders to these “thumpers” is critical; see the mission walkthrough below for details.) Second, you get to face your first Cybrids. What could be more fun than vaporizing evil, heartless computers?

Enemies

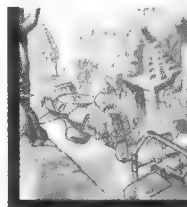
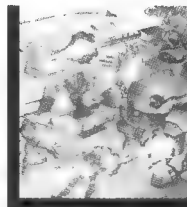
- ★ 4 Shepherd
- ★ 2 Goad
- ★ 2 Seeker
- ★ 3 Adjudicator
- ★ 2 Recluse

Recommended Rig Setup

There's no reason to change at this point. However, none of the Cybrids you face in this mission carry missiles. So you can dump your jammers and add other components or upgrade shields, armor, or reactors.

Mission Walkthrough

Climb the hill to the convoy, which is still loading evacuees and not ready to depart yet. Right away, your Hammertank unit contacts you. Press **[1]** to select “Start Thumping.” (If you miss the command window, just press **[SHIFT] + [F1]** and then press **[1]**.) Then park yourself near the convoy.



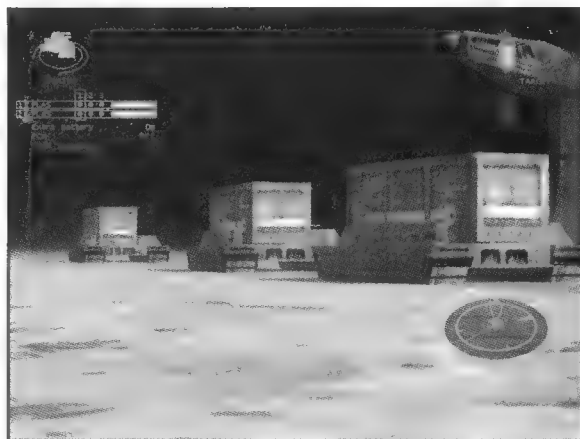


Fig. 9-9.

Hold off the first Cybrid waves while your convoy finishes loading.

A few seconds later, a Cybrid Goad attacks from the left flank. Send your squadmates after it; you stay by the convoy. Soon, a cutaway cinematic shows the Hammertanks destroying a pair of Cybrid Shepherds trying to sneak through the pass. Nice!



Fig. 9-10.

Start the Hammertanks right away. Then watch them "thump" a couple of gearheads.

Soon, the next Cybrid wave of two Seekers drops in and attacks from due south of the convoy. Open fire on them yourself, but stay close to the convoy and call in your squadmates to finish them off.

The convoy alerts you that it's pulling out for Nav Bravo, heading west. Hurry out in front of them because one more Goad drops in and attacks from the west. Order your

squad to attack it too. As you knock out the Goad, the convoy automatically heads toward the pass being cleared by the Hammertanks. (Don't worry. If they get there before you, they'll wait.)



Fig. 9-11.

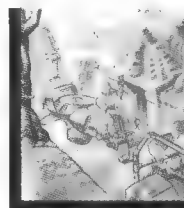
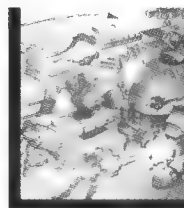
Your first Cybrid opponents feature Autocannons and aren't too tough. The real bad guys are soon to come.

Now you need to hurry. Zip straight to the pass and order your entire squad to join on you. Press **(SHIFT) + (F1)** and then press **(1)** to order the Hammertanks to stop thumping. Then hustle through the pass. *Be sure your squad stays joined with you* because more Cybrids are chasing you. Specifically, two Recluse tanks and a powerful Adjudicator now chase your group from the south. But you won't have to fight them if you hurry. There's a neat trick to keep them away.

When you exit the far end of the pass, stop and hit **(ENTER)** to monitor your group's progress on the Satellite Map. Important: Send no squadmates to tangle with the Cybrid pursuers! Get your team through the pass instead! Wait until the last friendly vehicle gets through the square area where the two Hammertanks are posted. Then hit **(SHIFT) + (F1)** to signal them to start thumping again. This will "seal the back door"—that is, delay the pursuing Cybrids and keep them off your tail.

Now escort the convoy toward Nav Bravo. Don't rush ahead of them! As you approach, you get bad news. Your escape ship is under Cybrid fire and soon bites the landing zone dust. In fact, two massive Adjudicators now occupy the Nav Bravo area. But "Icehawk" (Caanon Weathers) in Dropship Nine offers to extract your convoy. You get a new destination: Nav Charlie to the northwest. The convoy automatically veers in that direction.

If you stay away from Nav Bravo, the Adjudicators won't see you and will stay put... for now, anyway. Lead your team directly to Nav Charlie. As you approach, two more heavily





armed Cybrid Shepherds drop in and attack. Concentrate fire on them, one at a time. These four-gun Shepherds are tough. But if your squad is still intact, you should handle them pretty easily.

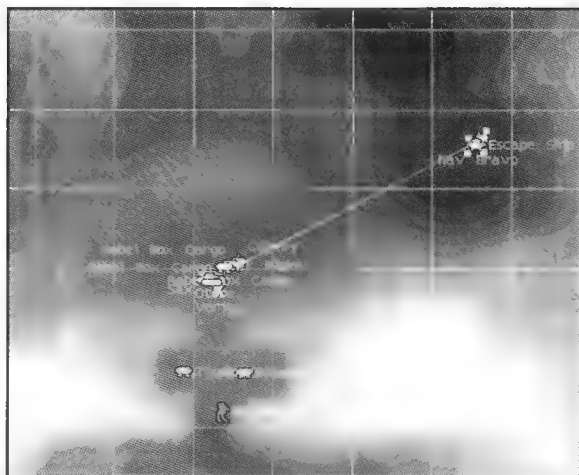
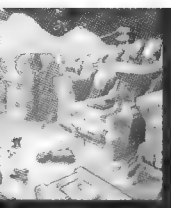


Fig. 9-12.

Once you get through the Hammertank-guarded pass, open your Satellite Map and monitor the situation. Don't restart the "thumping" until your forces are safely through!



Fig. 9-13.

Here's the situation: Caanon's dropping in, but two Cybrid Shepherds are shooting up the LZ. Knock them out quickly.

When you nail the second Shepherd, two things happen. First, Caanon's Dropship appears. This is good. Second, the two big Adjudicators from Nav Bravo appear. This is bad. Hustle your squad to intercept. This can be a tough fight, but Adjudicators are somewhat slow, and you have them outnumbered.

Once the Adjudicators are obliterated, your mission is accomplished. Say goodbye to Mars. Campaign over.

CAMPAIGN: HUMAN ALLIANCE

Chapter 10

Yes, the Cybrids are back. Hordes of pitiless “glitches” swarm the solar system under the near-omnipotent guidance of Prometheus. (How many megs of RAM do you suppose he has?) However, you and your elite squad have become a force to be reckoned with. And now Harabec and Caanon Weathers are fighting on the same team again.

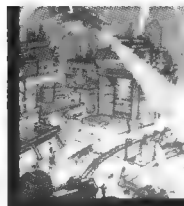
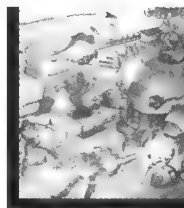
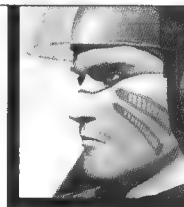




Fig. 10-1.
Hey, Cybrids. Meet the boys—
Caanon and Harabec.

MISSION: GUARDIAN ANGEL

PLANET: VENUS

LOCATION: DRACHENSATEM SPACEPORT

Here's a protect-the-base mission with a twist. Protect the Drachensatem spaceport from attack *and* keep safe the Terran Defense Force (TDF) dropships as they land, unload, and refuel. Each dropship needs about 30 seconds of dock time at the port. Keep the Cybrids at bay. As the briefing says, "The only good glitch is an offlined glitch."

ENEMIES

- ★ 2 Artillery
- ★ 1 Goad
- ★ 2 Seeker
- ★ 2 Adjudicator
- ★ 2 Recluse
- ★ 3 Shepherd
- ★ 1 Bolo

Recommended Rig Setup

As Graeme Bayless explains, "This is a land-on-the-ground and *Oh-my-God!* type of mission." As it opens, you must sprint up a far hill and pound huge Cybrid artillery vehicles

before they can shell the spaceport. A nice Turbine Booster is helpful if you can squeeze it into your Predator's configuration. No Cybrids carry missiles in this mission, so you can leave off jammers.

Mission Overview

Five TDF dropships try to land and refuel. The first one crashes, no matter what you do, but each of the four succeeding dropships depends on you for protection. So stay close to the spaceport. If Cybrid attackers run off into the distance, don't chase them yourself. Send squadmates after them.

One other important point: Solomon Sliwinski, the mission programmer for Guardian Angel, notes that one vehicle in each of the five Cybrid attack waves is designated the "killer." This unit ignores your attacks and exclusively targets the refueling TDF dropship. Find and destroy this "killer" first!

Mission Walkthrough

Right after *Fireheel Five* (the first TDF dropship) crashes, two units of Cybrid artillery land atop the hill on the opposite side of the base. Therefore, when the mission opens, immediately sprint to that spot. Keep your squad right with you. When the artillery drops in, order your squad to attack them. Take a few shots yourself, but then break off and sprint back to the base. You only have about 30 seconds until the next Cybrid wave hits, so let your squadmates finish off the artillery pieces.

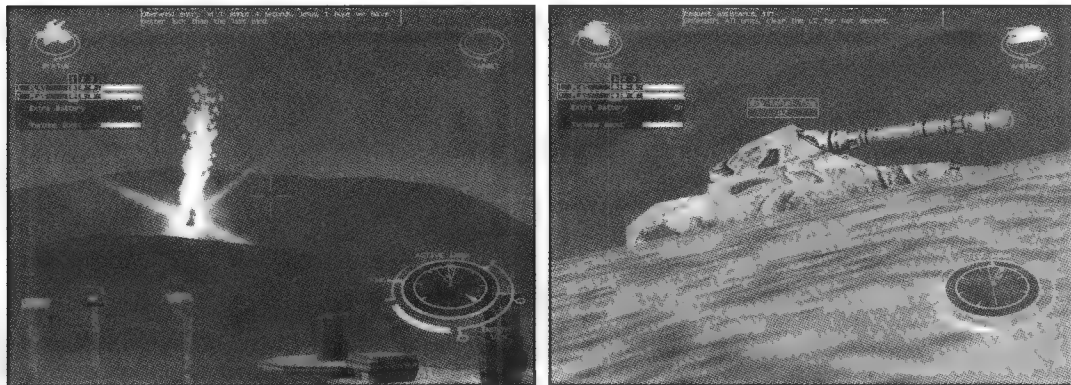
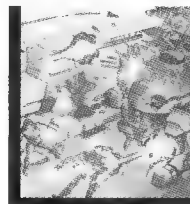


Fig. 10-2. See that fireball hitting the hill behind the base? It's one of two Cybrid artillery pieces with big guns. Send your squad after the artillery while you stick close to the station.





After the artillery drops in, five more waves of Cybrids land in random locations. Each wave has two Cybrid vehicles. Send your squad after one while you engage the other. Your squad usually finishes its target first, so listen for victory cries. When you hear "Target's dust!" immediately order the squad to attack your target.



TIP

Generally, when your mission is to defend something—usually a convoy or a base—send your squad after one first. Then you can engage the other foe until your team can regain you.

Unfortunately, you may have to handle the first wave—a Shepherd and a Goad—all by yourself. Try to determine which glitch is the "killer." It will head directly for the spaceport and ignore you. Target this one first.

Important note: The Cybrid arrivals are timed, not triggered by the destruction of the previous wave. So if you don't eliminate each wave quickly, the following wave will arrive in the midst of the fight. Each wave is tough enough on its own. So facing combined waves (each with its "dropship-killer" unit) is a daunting prospect. Kill quickly to avoid piggybacking waves of Cybrids.

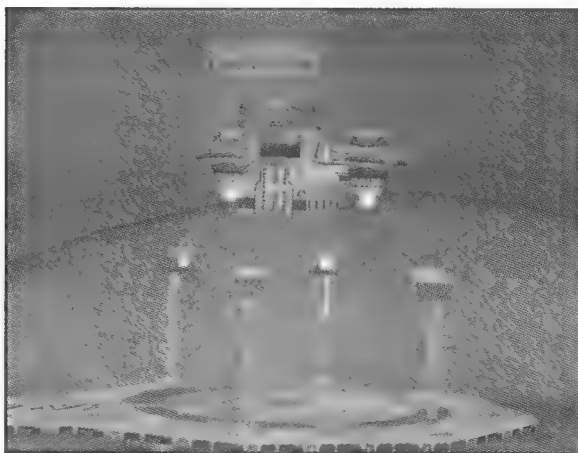


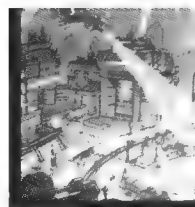
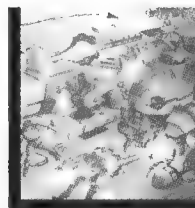
Fig. 10-3.

If you lose just one of these TDF dropships to Cybrid fire, the mission is a failure.



Fig. 10-4.

The last wave is a pair of tough Adjudicators armed with deadly Railguns.



MISSION: GLITCH HUNT

PLANET: VENUS

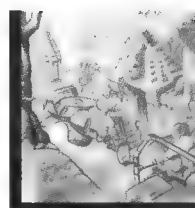
LOCATION: CARSON CITY ARCOLOGY

In this mission, you face a frightening array of Cybrid firepower. This is also your first encounter with a massive Executioner—the battleship, if you will, of the Cybrid fleet. Your primary objective is to capture a Cybrid Nexus, a mobile command unit that provides glitch vehicles with a direct link to Prometheus ITSELF.

You also get to scan a shattered Venusian arcology for human survivors. Being human, we do these sorts of things. It drives Cybrids nuts.

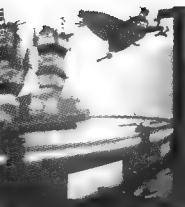
Enemies

- ★ 2 Goad
- ★ 1 Executioner
- ★ 3 Seeker





- ★ 3 Adjudicator
- ★ 3 Recluse
- ★ 3 Shepherd
- ★ 1 Cybrid Nexus



Recommended Rig Setup

This mission calls for firepower and special components rather than speed, but keep your trusty Predator. However, give yourself a Thermal Diffusion Jammer. This will help against the Executioner's Shrike heat-seeking missiles. Also, take a Doppelganger ECM Jammer for the Recluse tanks' radar-guided Arachnitron mines. Finally, install DURAC armor for added protection against the Radiation Guns in the final battle at the Nexus. (To be totally "rad-safe," add the Angel Life Support System, a special component that protects against radiation.)

Obviously, each of your squadmates should have DURAC and both kinds of jammers, too.



Fig. 10-5.

Nice crew you've got. Lots of elite reputations to go with the 18 guns you have mounted.

You and your squadmates now have access to all kinds of war vehicles, including the swift and powerful Knight's arsenal. Give Saxon a souped-up Knight's Paladin with a pair of Heavy Blasters or a Knight's Basilisk with a pair of Plasma Cannons. Hand Otohe an Apocalypse with a nice assortment of guns on its six mounts. Keep Verity in her hulking, kick-ass Olympian, but add a Quantum Gun to go with her MFAC on the extra large weapon mounts. She's still slow, but with this kind of firepower, Verity can take out a small moon.

Mission Walkthrough

TIP

As mentioned in the Recommended Rig Setup, it would be wise to carry both types of jammers on this mission.

Nice landscape, eh? Proceed slowly down through the canyon. Keep your speed at about 80 kph so your big gunboat buddies can keep up. Shortly after you pass the first batch of Cybrid Drop Pods, two weak Goads try to ambush you from behind. Try not to laugh as your squad easily shreds them.

Activate both your Thermal and ECM Jammers. Now descend to the gutted Carson City arcology. A big Executioner with heat-seeking Shrike missiles and Plasma Cannons sits right over the lip of the ridge in front of the ruins.

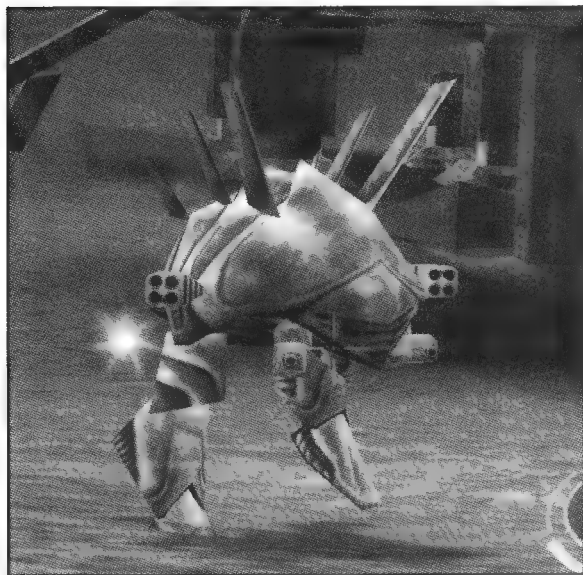


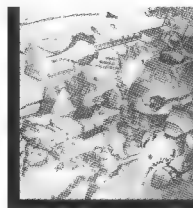
Fig. 10-6.

He's big, he's bad, and he's got missiles. You need your whole squad to tangle with an Executioner.

Don't be cavalier and rush in ahead of your squad. Wait near the ridge-top until everyone catches up; then send them on ahead against the Executioner. This massive brute can take a lot of punishment. Fortunately, your squad can now dish it out.

Once the big Cybrid is destroyed, a small Terran Utility truck approaches and contacts you. Listen to the driver report "glitches moving to the southeast."

Now it's time to scan buildings. One of them holds survivors. Keep scanning structures (target and then press **[I]**) until you find them. Then press **[F]** to Report Survivors.



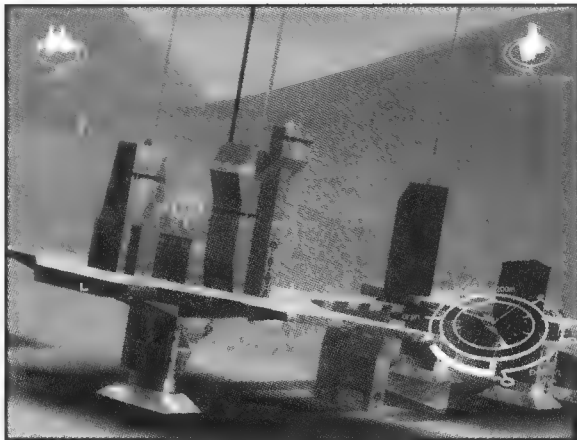
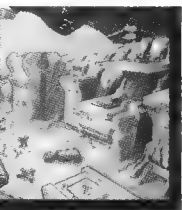


Fig. 10-7.
Don't forget to scan the Carson City ruins for survivors.

Let's go glitch hunting now, shall we? Move through the base ruins and head southeast. Be ready. As you troll down the valley, you draw ever closer to the Cybrid Nexus. And as your mission briefing points out, Cybrid units escorting a Nexus are heavily-armed and relentless. Wave after wave of these escorts will hit you.

First up is a wave of three Seekers. These are swift but go down fast. Dance your Predator in circles around each target. Pop off plasma rounds while your beefier squadmates chew the Seekers to pieces.

Continue southeast. The second wave of Nexus defenders consists of three Shepherds with Blink Guns. These nasty weapons bypass both shields and armor and go straight for internal components. Keep moving and firing, and again, let your squad do the heavy slugging.

Continue your descent into the southeast valley. If you didn't activate your ECM Jammer earlier, you'd better do so now. Cybrid wave number three swoops down from a hill to the left. A lethal trio of cloaked Recluse tanks slips in silently and spits Arachnitron spider mines at you. These little suckers seek their target via radar guidance, and they hurt badly if they hit home.

Before you continue on to the mission's final confrontation, check the status of your squad by targeting each one. This is probably the first campaign mission where they'll take serious damage. If any squadmate is badly hurt, consider ordering him/her to halt (hit **F4** and then press **[7]**). Then proceed south with your remaining team.

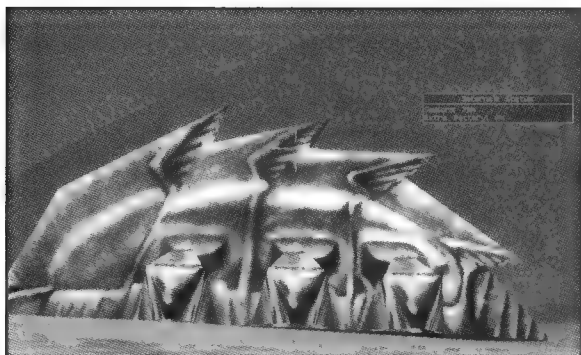


Fig. 10-8.

And there it is—the Cybrid Nexus. Report its position, but don't kill it. Otherwise, your mission fails.



Fig. 10-9.

The Nexus escort is composed of three Adjudicators with Rad Guns that target internal components (like my battery, here) and human pilot flesh.

The valley opens up into a wide plain. There, up ahead, lies the Cybrid Nexus. The target is heavily guarded, of course. Three murderous Adjudicators armed with pilot-killing Radiation Guns are deployed around it. (Gee, hope you have your DURAC installed!) Approach slowly at first. When you get within 800 meters of the Nexus, you “find” it. A message window opens to let you report its position. Then unleash your squad on the nearest Adjudicator. Join in the fray. You need concentrated fire to down these beasts quickly.

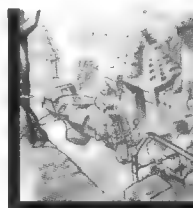
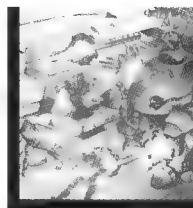
Remember: Don't kill the Nexus. When the final Adjudicator goes down, your mission is finished.

MISSION: ILL WIND BLOWING

PLANET: VENUS

LOCATION: SA THAURI

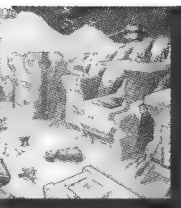
This is a difficult mission. However, it's far easier if you perform tasks in a particular order. These tasks have to do with the activation of the Sa Thauri defense turrets. For more on this, consult the mission overview.





Enemies

- ★ 3 Seeker
- ★ 2 Goad
- ★ 1 Shepherd
- ★ 2 Recluse
- ★ 2 Adjudicator
- ★ 3 Executioner



Recommended Rig Setup

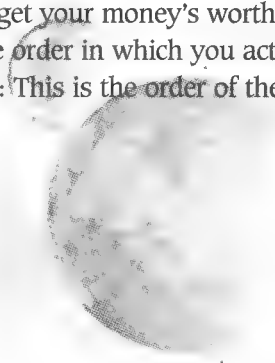
You face the same types of threats as in the last mission—Shrike heat-seeking missiles, Arachnitron radar-guided mines, Radiation Guns. So load the same special components—both Thermal and ECM jammers, as well as DURAC armor for everyone.

This is another “defend the base” mission, which calls for quick response. However, you face a squad of *three* nightmarish Executioners in the final assault wave. Therefore, you need some big guns in your arsenal. Keep Verity in her Olympian, but consider putting Otohe in a Knight's Gorgon and Saxon a Knight's Apocalypse. And arm each with lots of Heavy Blasters, Heavy Lasers, and the like. Executioners are enormous and easy to hit. But you need to hit with power, or they'll shrug off your weenie guns and tear you in half.

Your squad's lack of speed can be offset if you stay in your beloved Predator. This way, you can jet across Sa Thauri base to engage incoming Cybrid waves. Then draw their fire long enough for your teammates to lumber over and join the defense.

Mission Overview

OK, here's where you get your money's worth from this book. (This tip alone is worth five, maybe six bucks.) The order in which you activate the defense turrets is north, south, west, east. The reason: This is the order of the directions from which the first four Cybrid attack waves come.



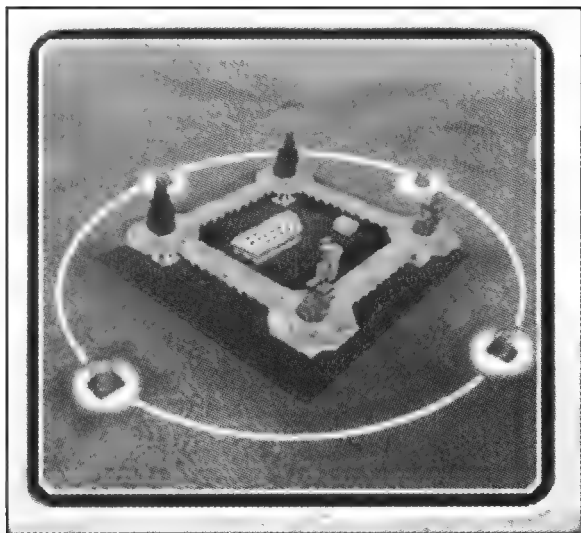


Fig. 10-10.

The order in which you online the four perimeter turrets is important. Go north, south, west, east.

As a result, two good things happen. First, each newly online turret joins you in the base defense with twin MFACs featuring one-shot kill capability. Second, you keep your very vulnerable caravan tech (the Terran Utility truck) on the *opposite* side of the base as the attack. If this seems confusing now, don't worry. You'll understand as we walk through the mission.

Mission Walkthrough

Sa Thauri is the last human-held Venusian outpost. The mission opens with Warwolf, a TDF patrol unit captain, telling you to stay put while his squad checks out Cybrid activity to the east. Little does Warwolf know that the "raiding party" is a squad of three Executioners.

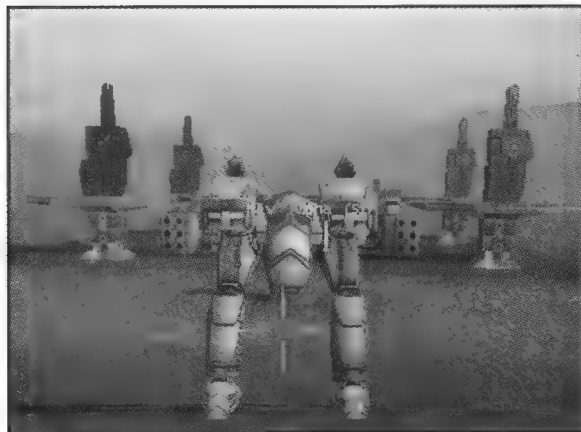
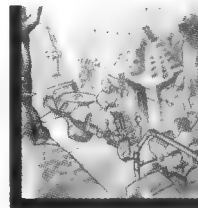
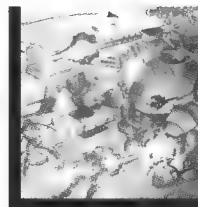


Fig. 10-11.

Poor Warwolf is about to meet his Executioners.





TIP

Immediately issue the command to online the northern turret! You can do it while Warwolf talks to you as the mission opens. If you wait too long, the turret won't be online when the Cybrid attack hits from the north.

Don't follow Warwolf and his Minotaurs; they're doomed. "They're like the expendable guys who wear red uniforms in *Star Trek*," says Graeme Bayless. "They go out to show you how the monster works."

Instead, note the MFAC turret directly in front of you. A small Terran Utility truck nearby waits for your command. As Warwolf leaves, *immediately* hit **[SHIFT] + [F1]**. The Issue Command window appears with four selections. Press **[1]** to select "Online Northern Turret." This sends the truck to activate the northern MFAC turret, a procedure that takes 30 seconds. (An onscreen timer counts down the seconds.)



Fig. 10-12.

Quickly select **[1]** to get the northern turret online in time for the Cybrid attack wave from the north.

TIP

Don't let your squad wander from the base!

If you issued the Online Northern Turret command soon enough, the tech completes the procedure before the Cybrids hit. Immediately order him on to the southern turret, then swivel to face north. *Activate both of your jammers in preparation for the coming attacks!* The first wave consists of three cloaked Seekers, one designated the "truck-killer". It will ignore you and target the Terran Utility truck. Obviously, don't let it get past your squad.

When the first battle is done, turn and hustle across the base to the southern perimeter area. Keep an eye on the Turret Repair timer. The caravan tech reports when the repair is complete. If he finishes in the heat of battle however, you may not hear him. When the southern turret is online, immediately send the tech on to the western turret.

Take up a position in front of the southern turret. The second wave hits from the south. This attack squad features two Goads with ELF's. As you know, ELF's are deadly but short-range weapons. So keep your distance from the Goads if you can. (It's tough. They're quick.) Again, keep your eye on the Turret Repair timer. When the western turret is repaired, send the tech to the final turret in the east.

After the Goads die, hustle to the western perimeter to engage the third Cybrid wave, a Shepherd and two Recluses. Be sure your ECM Jammer is engaged. Remember, Recluses toss Arachnitron mines that creep like spiders, seeking your vehicle. The Shepherd is dangerous, but target the Recluses first. Keep your distance if possible.

By now, all four turrets should be online. After you shatter the third wave, hustle across the base to the eastern perimeter for the fourth wave. This one features two potent Adjudicators armed with Shrike missiles, Radiation Guns, and Twin Lasers. If you have your Thermal Diffuser and DURAC armor, you're in good shape. Otherwise, ouch.

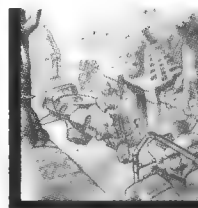
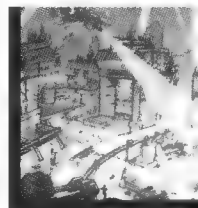
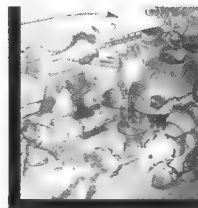


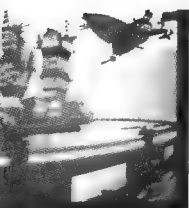
Fig. 10-13.

God, they're ugly. Expect your squad to take some serious damage from this Executioner wave.

The fifth and final wave rises from the east. Earlier, you heard Warwolf's agitated report of "huge" enemies. It turns out to be a squad of three monstrous Executioners armed with Particle Beam Weapons, Railguns, and other big sticks of death. However, if you have the eastern turret online and your squad properly outfitted, you can actually match these big guys, gun for gun.

It's a brutal slugfest, but brutal in a *fun* way. Just remember your Predator is probably the most vulnerable vehicle in the field now. So keep moving full speed and let your Plasma Cannons seek targets.





LOSING A SQUADMATE

It is very possible to lose a squadmate to the final wave of Executioners. You've built your squad's skills over many missions now, but you have a choice. You can replay the mission and try to keep everyone alive. Or you can recruit a new pilot for your team.

Fortunately, several superior pilots are available, including "Jaguar" (Colossa Eun Alba) who sports a legendary reputation and an excellent rating as a pilot.

JAGUAR

COLOSSA EUN ALBA



REP	Legendary
PILOTING	Excellent
GUNNERY	Average
MISSIONS	89
KILLS	24

BIRTHDATE

2277

ASSESSMENT

Aggressive Tactician

Fig. 10-14.

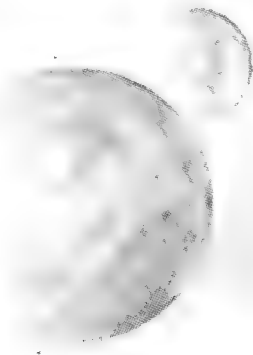
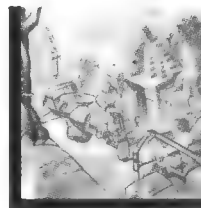
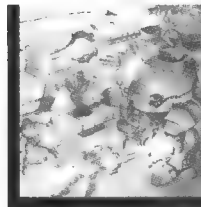
Colossa Eun Alba, known as Jaguar, is a legendary replacement pilot.



CAMPAIGN: DIES IRAE

Chapter 11

This campaign is short, but very sweet. You conduct just two missions on Titan, the Saturn moon. Both are critical to the long-term survival of the human species. Both are combat intensive.



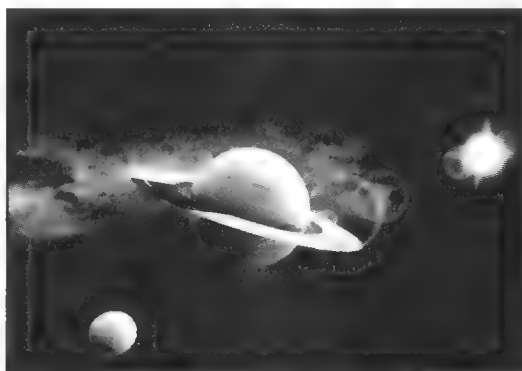


Fig. 11-1. Frozen colonists, the Dies Irae contingent, must launch from Saturn's moon, Titan, to establish human worlds elsewhere in the galaxy.

Your first mission is to protect a laser accelerator beam station for the Dies Irae contingent. The contingent is made up of several space-faring "arks" carrying cryogenically frozen passengers whose assignment is to establish human colonies in other star systems. Your second mission is to use a Nexus transmitter to commandeer a Cybrid transport. This capture may allow TDF engineers to etch a path to the hidden Cybrid mastermind, Prometheus.

MISSION: ANIMAL TENACITY

PLANET: TITAN

LOCATION: ESKANDANI CHASM

If you play sims like *Starsiege* for sizzling combat action, this mission's for you. Animal Tenacity is all about fighting Cybrids—no more, no less. Many of the Dynamix testers and designers find this mission most satisfying. Radios crackle with heated chatter, Cybrid hordes swarm in all directions, and Herc heavyweights unload thunderous volleys of fire.

Enemies

- ★ 3 Seeker
- ★ 4 Goad
- ★ 4 Shepherd
- ★ 2 Adjudicator
- ★ 2 Executioner

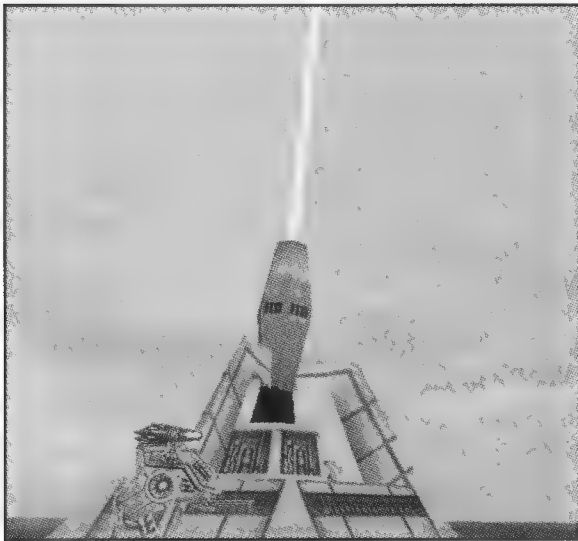
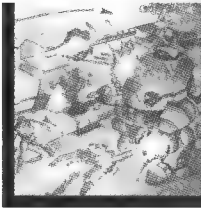


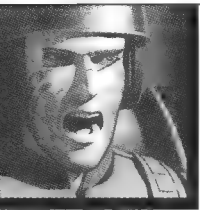
Fig. 11-2.
Your job is to display some “animal tenacity” in defending this accelerator beam for the Dies Irae.

Recommended Rig Setup

Give your squadmates the heaviest vehicles you can assign. Animal Tenacity, as the name suggests, is not about speed. It's about firepower, pure and simple. Mission programmer Chris Eastland even suggests, “Try it with two Apocalypses and two Olympians. That's 24 gun mounts right there.”

Although Chris's idea sounds like fun, you should continue in the Predator tank with Plasma Cannons. As in other protection missions, you need something with enough speed to catch enemies who slip behind your defensive perimeter. Take a good sensor like the Longbow too. Cloaked Cybrids abound in this mission, and good sensors detect them better.



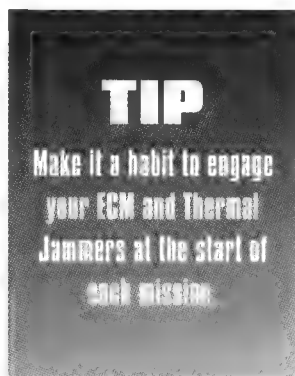


By all means give your squadmates huge, blazing gunboats. Olympians and Apocalypses are good, but check out the Knight's Gorgon. With two extra-large and two large weapon mounts, this beast can punch out Executioners *and* run at a 99 kph clip. Also, its 80-ton mass limit allows it to carry big reactors and shields too.



Two last tips: First, mount energy weapons on everyone. Your team faces teeming hordes of Cybrids. You don't want your guys running out of ammo in the midst of a hot squabble. Second, install jammers and DURAC armor on everyone. Cybrids just love their missiles and Radiation Guns.

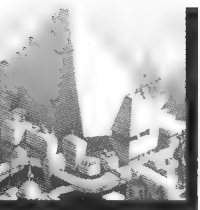
Mission Overview



As the mission opens, both Caanon and Harabec lead squads to other nav points on the base perimeter. Don't follow them! If you do, Cybrids pour through the gap you leave at Nav Alpha and destroy the accelerator beam station with ease.

Mission Walkthrough

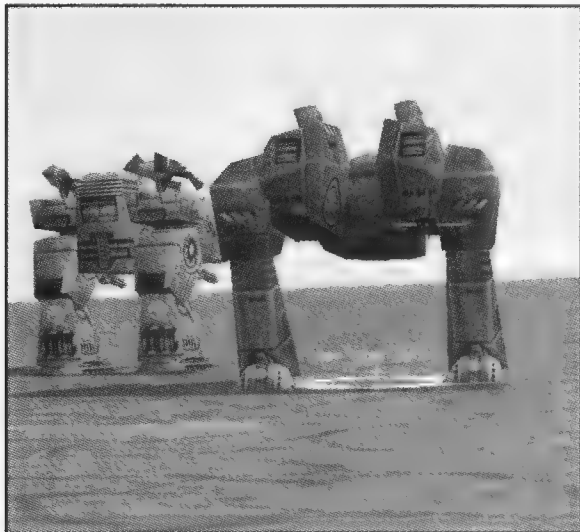
Lead your team out to Nav Alpha and set up facing away from the base. Soon, the first wave—three light Cybrid Seekers—approaches your position. You'll probably see them in the distance, running right to left. The mission program gives them a one-in-seven chance to attack the base. Most of the time, however, they're a diversion. If you go out and chase these Seekers, they cloak, speed up, and lure you away from Nav Alpha. Guess what happens then? A second wave of three cloaked Goads slips in behind you from the northwest and attacks the beam station.



So keep your team at Nav Alpha. If the Seekers run away, let them go and order your squad to join on you. (Don't worry, the Seekers will be back to engage you after you fight the Goads.) The Goad squad soon approaches, brandishing Radiation Guns.

The third wave is comprised of three Shepherds. Hold your position at Nav Alpha until they get close. This is straightforward fighting. Note, however, that they carry Nano-Infusers, which inflict tremendous armor damage and are death to tanks. Keep your distance and let your squad do the fighting. When you kill the last Shepherd, the launch sequence begins. Ten seconds later, off go the Dies Irae ships, riding a beam!

Your job is not finished yet. When the launch cinematic ends, a fourth Cybrid wave hits. Three pods drop in practically on your head, releasing two gunslinging Adjudicators and another Shepherd.

**Fig. 11-3.**

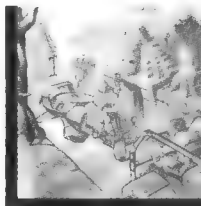
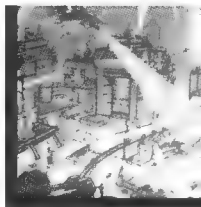
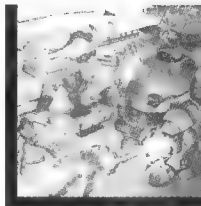
Keep your big boys close to Nav Alpha. If they stray too far, Cybrids will exploit the gap.

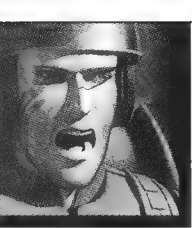
**Fig. 11-4.**

The moment this cinematic showing the Dies Irae launch ends, Cybrids assault your position. See them dropping from the sky?

To further complicate matters, a fifth wave slips in from the southwest while you fight. Get ready to rock. Two hulking Executioners and a sneaky, little Goad want to demolish you. The Goad tries to sprint past, but the big fellas rumble in slowly. You should have plenty of time to decimate the previous wave before you engage the beef boys. Note: These Executioners carry missiles, so be sure your jammers are engaged.

The mission is successful when this final wave is destroyed.





MISSION: TICKET TO RIDE

PLANET: TITAN

LOCATION: CINQUINI FRACTURE

This is probably the toughest mission thus far in the Human Campaign. It *seems* straightforward and routine until the hard-charging finale. Then you'll need speed, slick piloting, and a firm command of both the situation and your squadmates.



Enemies

- ★ 2 Bolo
- ★ 7 Shepherd
- ★ 1 Executioner
- ★ 1 Missile Turret
- ★ 1 Adjudicator
- ★ 1 Communications Tower



Recommended Rig Setup

Ready for a change? Those Plasma Cannons are swell, but their 2.2 second reload time can be painfully slow. Switch to a pair of Smart Guns. Their projectiles inflict half the damage of a Plasma Cannon hit (200 versus 400 for both shields and armor). However, the 0.8 second reload time means Smart Guns fire at more than twice the rate. Also, they're far lighter and require only half the energy consumption of Plasma Cannons. All around, they're good for your Predator.

Before you move on, be sure to add a Turbine Booster. At the mission's end, you face a timed challenge, and you *may* need the extra speed.





Fig. 11-5.

Here's a nice setup for your Predator. Smart Guns seek and fire quickly. Quicksilver Nano-Armor repairs itself.

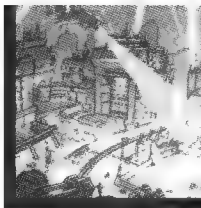
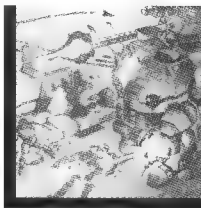
And that's not all. Your tech level 9 access lets you install a new type of tank-friendly armor. Quicksilver Nano-Armor actually repairs and reallocates itself as damage is taken. It also protects against tank-killing nano-weapons.

Mission Walkthrough

Proceed to Nav Alpha. Your NTDF sentry contact, Sergeant Cassell, describes how a "toaster dropship" recently landed at Nav Charlie. This toaster happens to be the Cybrid transport you want to commandeer. After Cassell staggers away, proceed to the next ridge overlooking the valley below.

Directly ahead, you see spinning devices. These are Cybrid motion detectors. When these particular ones detect you, three Shepherds will drop in to investigate. Avoid them for now.

Instead, veer sharply left and descend into the flats below. Two Bolos armed with short-range Radiation Guns patrol the area. Lead your squad to them and open fire, but keep your distance! The Rads inflict internal damage and can kill your rig's pilot—namely, you!



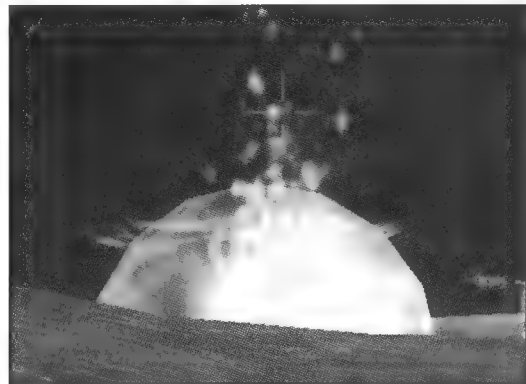


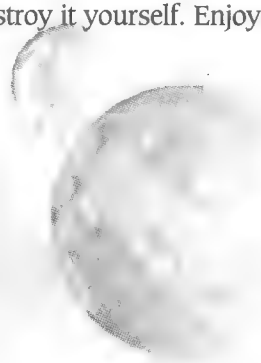
Fig. 11-6. When Cybrid motion detectors ascertain your presence, drop pods hit the ground and disgorge Shepherds.

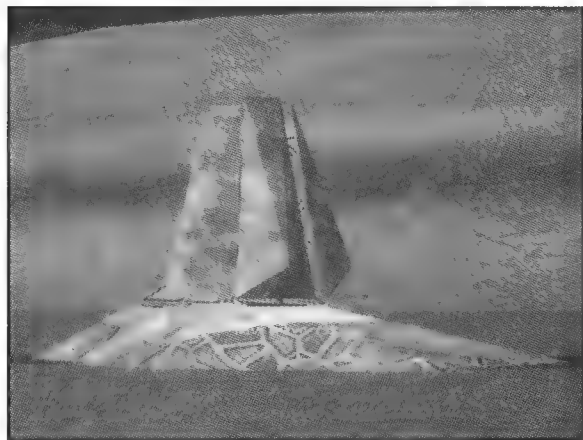
Now cut back toward the motion detectors. When they sense your presence, three Shepherds drop from the sky and attack. If you haven't already dispatched the Bolos, you may be tangling with five opponents at once. It's probably the first time your squad has been outnumbered in a campaign skirmish. Deal with it.

Once the Shepherds are spare parts, continue south to Nav Bravo, which marks the Communications Tower you must eliminate. As you approach, you'll find a Cybrid Executioner sporting two huge racks of Shrike heat-seeking missiles and some Railguns. And that's not all. A Shrike missile turret sits nearby too. Fire up that Thermal Diffuser. And by the way, an Adjudicator lurks at the back of the small complex.

Send your squad after the Executioner. After all, they have the big guns. You target the missile turret. When the turret blows, go for the Adjudicator. By now, your team should have cooked the Executioner; call them to attack your target.

When the heat's finally over, target the now-retracted Communications Tower in the center of the base. Destroy it yourself. Enjoy every shot. Isn't it fun eviscerating something that can't shoot back?



**Fig. 11-7.**

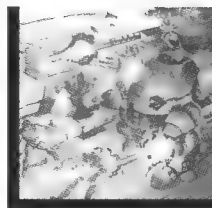
Destroy this retracted Communications Tower to complete one of your primary objectives.

Continue toward Nav Charlie. You can see the Cybrid dropship in the distance. Get limber. If you don't move efficiently here, this mission finale can be one of the toughest sequences to complete in *Starsiege*.

Two Shepherds guard the dropship landing pad. Approach slowly to ensure that your squadmates are right with you. This is important. When the pad-guarding Shepherds see you, they move forward to intercept. Halt just before you get to the hilltop that descends to the landing pad. This cuts off the Shepherds' line of fire until they reach the top the hill.

Timing is crucial. Your squad wants to attack the Shepherds. Hit **[F4]** and then **[2]** to keep them joined on you until just before the Cybrids reach the crest of the hill. Then attack with a concentrated fury. This triggers the Cybrid dropship's launch countdown. Now you have only 30 seconds to get within 200 meters of the dropship and use your Nexus transmitter to take control of the craft.

Here's the rub: The moment you activate the Nexus transmitter, two drop pods bearing "ship-killer" Shepherds hit the ground. They land one at a time on the far side of the landing pad. Each of these Shepherds will target the vulnerable dropship; each can kill it with a few shots unless you can stop it.



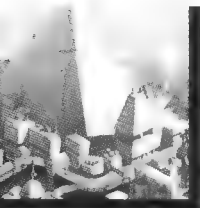


Fig. 11-8.

Hurry! Your approach triggered a launch timer. You have 30 seconds to get within 200 meters of that dropship and then use your Nexus transmitter.

TIP

Attack the first ship-killer Shepherd to draw its attention. Then send your squad after it and watch carefully for the second flaming drop pod. When the second Shepherd emerges, attack immediately to draw his attention while your squad finishes off the first one.

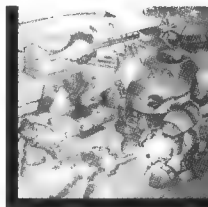
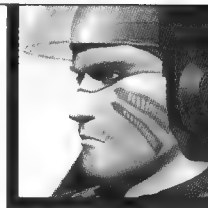
Here's the trick: First, destroy the two pad-guarding Shepherds as *fast as possible*. Then hustle to the transport with your squad in tow. (A quick Turbo boost can help here.) If you have the time, get around to the dropship's far side before you activate your Nexus transmitter. Do so by pressing **[SHIFT] + [F1]** and then pressing **[1]**. In any case, wait until the countdown's very last second to use the transmitter. Give your squad as much time as possible to reach the landing pad. Then lead them up the slope behind the dropship to confront the ship-killer Shepherds.

If you hit the Shepherds soon enough, you and your squadmates draw their fire away from the Cybrid dropship. If you don't, the ship goes up in smoke, as does TAC COM's clever master plan to use it as a Trojan Horse.

CAMPAIGN: CARDINAL SPEAR

Chapter 12

OK, the cakewalk is over. Cardinal Spear is a three-mission unit, and you can't save your game once you get started. You also can't change your vehicles after the first Pluto mission, A Spear in the Dark. Therefore, it is crucial to set up good rig configurations before you begin. Your vehicles must have the power and flexibility to last through three separate missions.



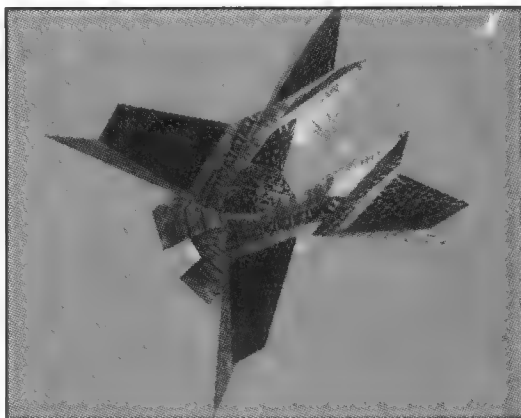
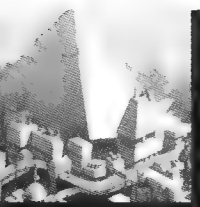
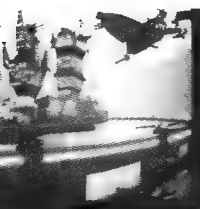
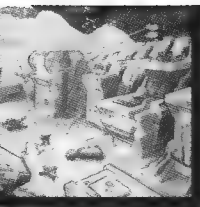


Fig. 12-1. Glitches intercept your Trojan Horse transport so that it spits out strike team Drop Pods in a scattered frenzy.

As the Cardinal Spear campaign opens, the Human Alliance has a Cybrid dropship (the one you captured in *Ticket to Ride*). The plan is to use the dropship to slip a strike team onto Pluto, near the lair of Prometheus. This team is formidable and includes your squad and both Weathers brothers, Caanon and Harabec.

In the first two missions, you fight your way to the lair. The third and final mission is a one-on-one duel with Prometheus, one of the toughest bosses you'll ever face.

MISSION: A SPEAR IN THE DARK

PLANET: PLUTO

LOCATION: PLAIN OF GEHENNA

Things sometimes go wrong. In this case, Cybrid interceptors recognize your Trojan Horse for what it is. They force the commandeered dropship to jettison the strike team's Drop Pods sooner than planned. This scatters your squad over a wide area. So the first order of business is to gather your squadmates. Then you must free Caanon, who is trapped in his pod.

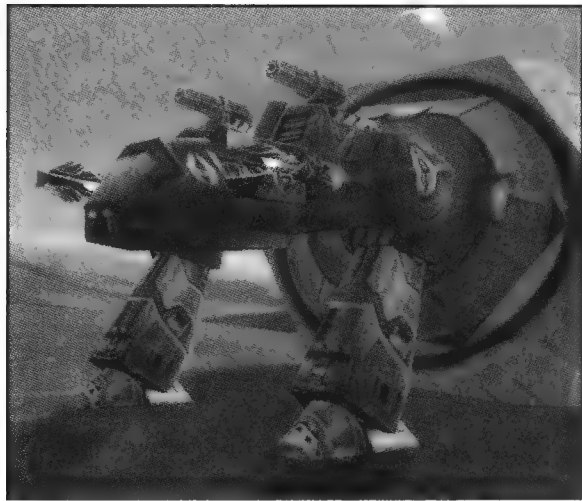


Fig. 12-2.
Guys? Hey, where is everybody?

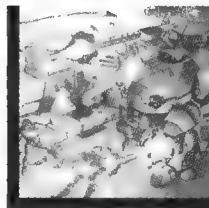
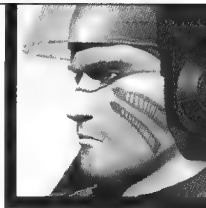
Enemies

- ★ 4 Seeker
- ★ 4 Goad
- ★ 3 Adjudicator
- ★ 3 Shepherd
- ★ 1 Executioner
- ★ 2 Bolo

Recommended Rig Setup

Again, this is the very last time you can make alterations in the Human Campaign. So choose carefully. Here are some tips from the *Starsiege* design team.

First of all, abandon your Predator grav-tank if you haven't already. Give yourself a rig with a good punch for the final duel with Prometheus. A Knight's Gorgon with twin MFACs and twin EMPs is a fine choice. It's powerful yet not too slow. You'll probably have to add an AGRV Module so you can carry all the weight. Be sure your other special component is a Thermal Diffusion Jammer. You face a lot of Shrike heat-seeker missiles in this campaign.



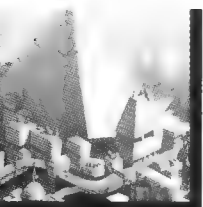
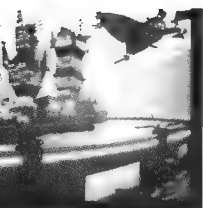


Fig. 12-3.

Gorgons are good for the Cardinal Spear. Remember, you can't change your rig for these last three missions.

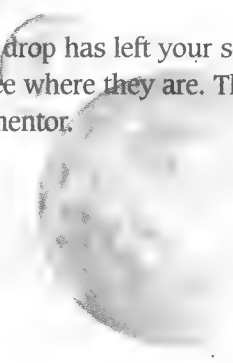
Pass your Predator to a squadmate with a high piloting rating. Switch back to the Plasma Cannons and add a Nano-Repair Module. Combined with the Quicksilver armor, the module will keep the Predator's skin healthy.

Give your other two squadmates big, hard-hitting Hercs such as the Olympian or Apocalypse. Stay away from ammo-firing weapons, particularly those with limited ammunition—Blast Cannons, Railguns, or the nano-weapons. Over the course of three missions, your team will expend that ammo with no way to reload. For the same reason, don't install missiles or mines either. Stick to energy weapons, because of their unlimited ammo supply.

Be sure each squadmate has a Thermal Diffuser as well. You don't need ECM Jammers however. Ultralight sensors are fine for your buddies (they use space efficiently), but your own vehicle should have a good long-range sensor with decent resolution, such as the Crossbow, Longbow, or Ranger.

Mission Walkthrough

It seems the scrambled drop has left your squad's pods scattered over half of Pluto. Open your Satellite Map to see where they are. They're all over, and they're busy. Each one faces at least one Cybrid tormentor.



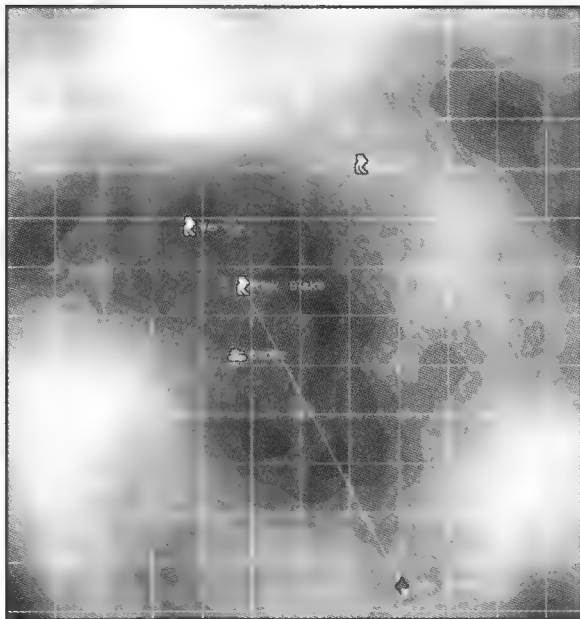


Fig. 12-4.

The troops are scattered. Call them together before moving on to Nav Icehawk.

TIP

Don't leave without your squad! If they haven't rejoined you by mission's end, they are considered lost in action. This is bad because you can't recruit new squadmates in this campaign.

The action picks up here. Two Cybrid Goads attack soon after your drop. Your MFACs, if well-aimed, can take each out with one or two puffs. Nevertheless, Goads are quick and hard to hit. As you tangle, you learn that Caanon is trapped in his Drop Pod.

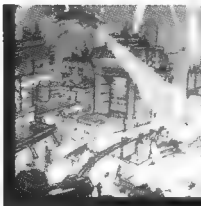
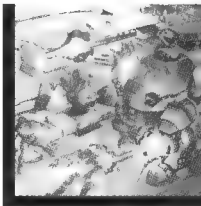
Now you have a new primary mission objective: Save Caanon.

The squadmate in the Predator shows up soon. The other two in the Olympians (or whatever heavy vehicle you assigned) will take a while. Once the Goads are black and crispy, check your Satellite Map again to see if your squad is still fighting.

Order idle squadmates to form on you. Wait until everyone is

one big, happy family again. Then head toward your new destination, Nav Icehawk. Set a slow pace to keep your formation tight.

As you travel, Cybrids accost you from random directions. First comes an Adjudicator followed by a couple of Shepherds and more Adjudicators. Continue toward Nav Icehawk, turning your massed fire on these annoying interlopers along the way.



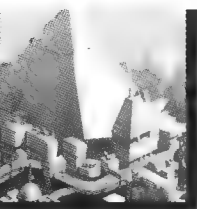


Fig. 12-5.

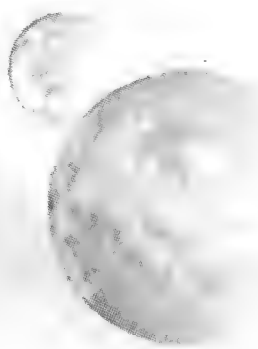
Stay about 500 meters from Caanon's Drop Pod and deploy your squad in a defensive perimeter around it.

Soon you'll see Caanon's defective Drop Pod up ahead. Stop when you get 500 meters from the pod. Then set nav points for each of your squadmates, forming a defensive perimeter around the pod. *Important: Let your squad take up their positions before you approach.* Here's why: Cybrid killers will attack the pod, but the attack is triggered by *your* approach, *not* your squadmates'. So you can array your forces around the pod well before the attack waves begin.

Now comes hell on Pluto. Six powerful Cybrids hit you one at a time, including an Adjudicator, an Executioner, and a nasty, little Bolo. They're time-triggered, so once they start, a new Cybrid attacker will rush in every 15-30 seconds. As a result, these waves can piggyback if you don't take them out quickly.

Also note that these attackers target Caanon's Drop Pod until you or a squadmate draws their fire. Once a Cybrid attacker switches its attention to you or a squadmate, it won't re-target Caanon's pod until it eliminates the new target. But you won't be eliminated, will you?

Kill off all six attackers to win the mission and free your fearless Knight leader from that awful pod.



MISSION: BOWELS OF NIGHT

PLANET: PLUTO

LOCATION: PLAIN OF GETHENNA

Bowels of Night is a straightforward mission. Your goal throughout the Cardinal Spear campaign is to reach Nav Omega, the valley where Prometheus waits.

There are three highlights in this mission. One, you meet your first (and only) squads of Platinum Guard Cybrids, and they are lethal. Two, you get to pop a big, juicy Cybrid Nexus at mission's end. And three, you get to fight alongside Caanon Weathers, Knight of the Realm and one mean son of a gun.

Enemies

- ★ 4 Platinum Guard Adjudicators
- ★ 2 Platinum Guard Executioners
- ★ 1 Cybrid Protector
- ★ 1 Cybrid Nexus

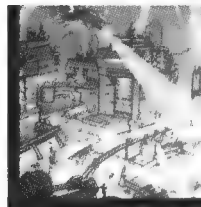
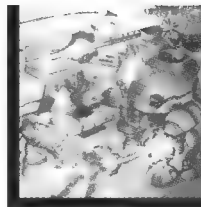
Mission Overview

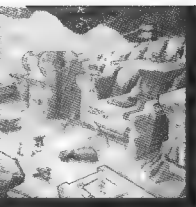
The good news is that Caanon has some nano-repair packs that will bring your squad's equipment back up to full strength. The bad news is that anything you lost in the last mission—weapons, components, squadmates—is gone forever.



Fig. 12-6.

Caanon's nano-repair packs bring your troops back up to speed. Can you tell he's in a hurry?





WARNING

Careful! Elite enemies such as Cybrid Platinum Guard units will specifically target your weapons and legs, and they'll do so with great accuracy. To avoid this, keep moving! (Have you heard this before?) Again, if you lose weapons before your final confrontation with Prometheus, you're in big, big trouble.

Your primary goal in this mission is to run with Caanon to Nav Omega. He's fast, and he'll charge ahead regardless of your progress. Caanon is also very tough, but he can lose. The route is guarded by angry swarms of Cybrids, including some of Prometheus's special Platinum Guard units. Give Caanon support, and try to make it through without losing any weapons or squadmates.

Mission Walkthrough

TIP

If you have a squadmate in a speedy Predator, consider assigning him to defend Caanon.

When the mission starts, Caanon sprints off like a man possessed. If you're in a slow Herc like the Knight's Gorgon, try to keep up with him. If he gets too far ahead of you, he'll get into deep trouble. Unfortunately, even at full speed you'll probably lag behind a bit. Just stay as close to Caanon's Basilisk as you can.



Fig. 12-7.

If you can't keep up with Caanon, assign a speedy buddy (in a Predator, for example) to defend him.

Suddenly, two Platinum Guard Adjudicators drop in and attack. (Be ready! Sometimes they drop right on your head.) Get on them before they can focus on Caanon. You want your leader damage-free when he faces the next wave.

When the Adjudicators finally expire, hustle to catch Caanon again. Hurry! Two Platinum Guard Executioners will pound him next. These muscle-bound guys fire Railguns and Particle Beams—two powerful and dangerous weapons. Help Caanon with the Executioner he chooses to duel, and send your squad after the other one.

The moment the second Executioner goes down, sprint towards Nav Omega. Again, if Caanon is too fast for you, assign a quicker squadmate to defend him. Up ahead lies a Cybrid Nexus guarded by two Platinum Guard Adjudicators.

These particular Adjudicators are elite Cybrids armed with Radiation Guns, Railguns, Nano-Infusers, and Twin Lasers. They can be trouble if you're not very good. But by now, you really *should* be very good. Caanon will chip in his share of kills too.

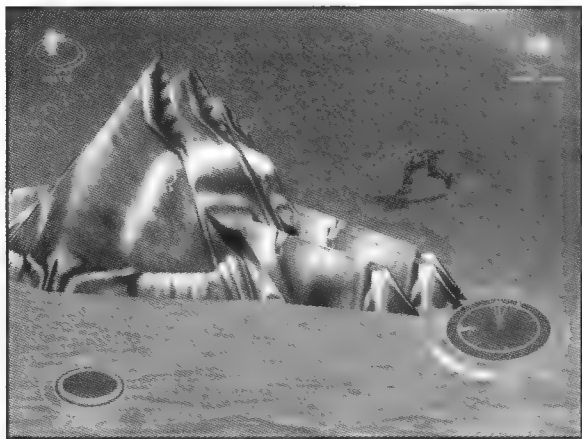
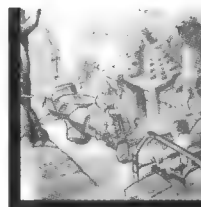
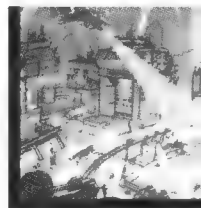
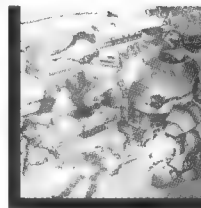


Fig. 12-8.

After you vaporize the Platinum Guard escorts, join Caanon in the slaughter of the helpless Cybrid Nexus.

Once the Adjudicators are diffused into scrap, focus all guns on the Nexus. This is a turkey shoot—the last one you'll see in the Human campaign.





MISSION: FEAR NO EVIL

PLANET: PLUTO

LOCATION: NAV OMEGA

This is it. You and Prometheus, *mano a mano*. If you walk into this battle missing weapons or key components, you might consider loading your last saved game. You can't beat Prometheus with anything but your best rig.

Before the mission starts you get some pretty bad news. Harabec is dead.

Or is he? Stay tuned.



Fig. 12-9.

Looks like Harabec ran into a glitch or two.

Mission Walkthrough

Ignore all the commotion and head directly to Nav Omega. Nobody, friend or enemy, will follow you. You have one simple job. As Caanon says, "Vaporize that tin can for Mother Earth."

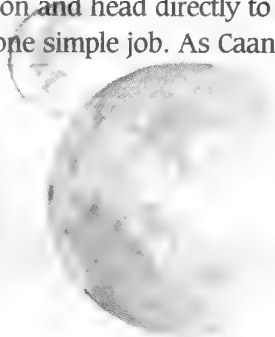




Fig. 12-10.

And there he is. The Big Bug himself.

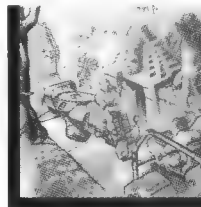
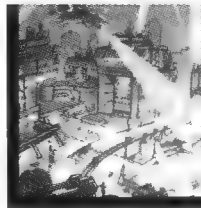
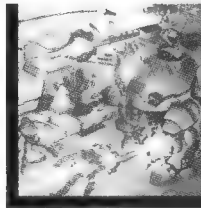
Unfortunately, there is little information about your enemy. As mission programmer Trevor Lanz explains, “We thought somebody might find the perfect configuration for killing the big, bad boss. So we created six totally random configurations for Prometheus.” Yes, Prometheus changes each time you start or restart Fear No Evil.

Diabolical, eh? Each configuration features a different combination of weapons hung on Prometheus’s “hardpoints,” or weapon mounts. The six configurations are as follows:

1. Railgun, Radiation Gun, 2 MFACs, 2 Nannite Cannons
2. Radiation Gun, Electron Flux Whip (ELF), 2 Blink Guns, 2 Particle Beam Weapons
3. Railgun, Radiation Gun, 2 Quantum Guns, 2 Heavy Blast Cannons
4. 2 Smart Guns, 2 Blink Guns, 2 Plasma Cannons
5. Radiation Gun, Electro-Mag Autocannon (EMC), 2 Railguns, 2 Particle Beam Weapons
6. Radiation Gun, Railgun, 2 EMCs, 2 Heavy Blast Cannons

Every one of those configurations is lethal. And as you can see, the variety keeps you from finding a perfect antidote configuration. Furthermore, aside from the formidable firepower, Prometheus is quite mobile, turns very fast, and doesn’t miss. All in all, that’s a scary boss.

Here’s a few strategies. First of all, as always, keep moving. If you ever stop, you’re dead. Second, take an agile vehicle with enough firepower to get in some good punches. Your Predator, with a pair of Heavy Blasters or Plasma Cannons, can dance and hit. But with only two guns, you have to hit a *lot* of times to put the Supreme Glitch down. On the





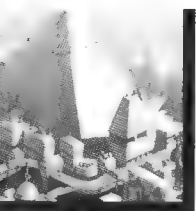
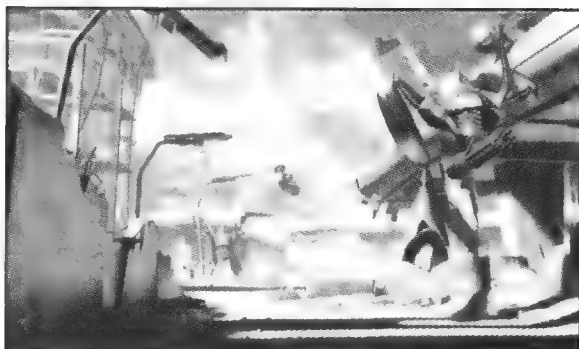
other hand, your Knight's Gorgon with twin MFACs has lots of firepower and just enough speed to duck a few shots. But you'd better not miss. Prometheus won't.

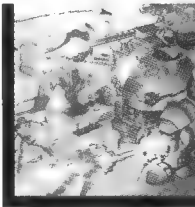
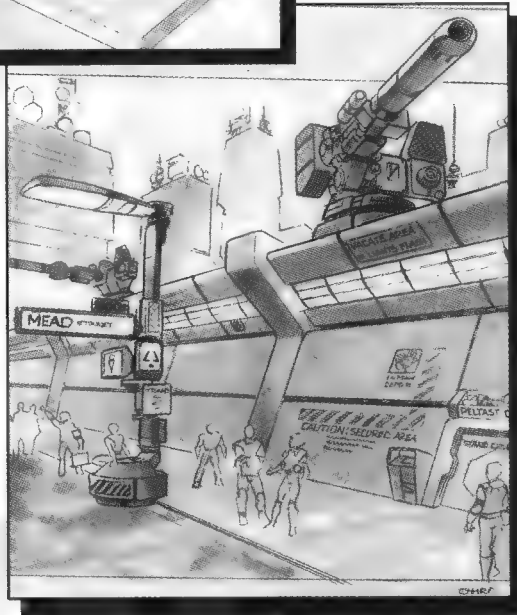
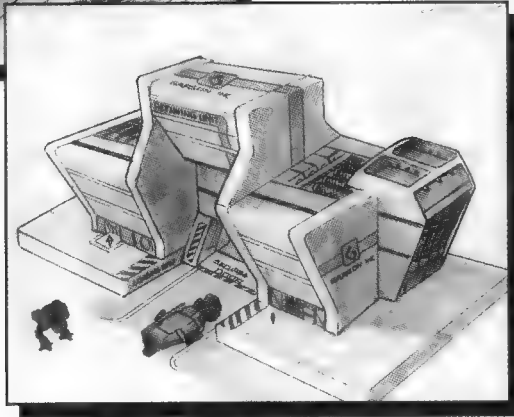
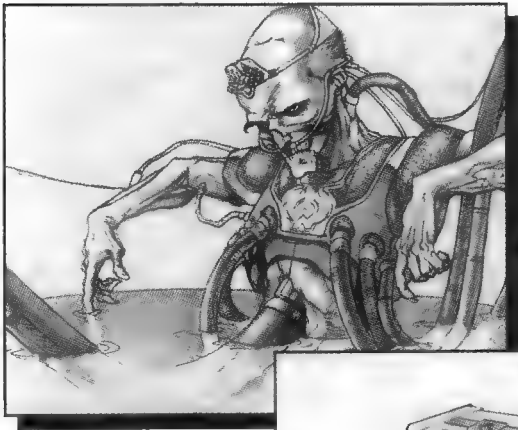
Trevor Lanz suggests you try to pick off his weapons. "Prometheus carries huge guns, so it's easier to draw a bead on them," he says. Once the guns are gone, you can tear him apart at your leisure.

If you choose to go for the knockout blow in the legs or body instead, keep a steady stream of fire on target. Prometheus also has Quicksilver Nano-Armor in all six of his configurations—armor that regenerates. He also has a shield amplifier. He's one bad walking CPU.

When you finally get in a kill shot, watch the final movie carefully.

Can you say "sequel?"







STARSIEGE
UNIVERSE

Part Four

THE CYBRID CAMPAIGNS

Time to roast some animal flesh.

Welcome to the Cybrid campaigns. The Cybrid life is simple. It's all about attacking. The standard Cybrid mission is, "Go to point A and kill everything. Then go to point B and kill everything." You won't be taking tea with the locals, trying to win their hearts. No, the quickest way to an animal's heart is through the breastbone with a Compression Laser. One of your Cybrid squadmates is named <Eats-Only-Heads>. Got it?

Mission coordinator Graeme Bayless finds the Cybrid campaigns quite compelling. "I think we built a perfect complement to the Human campaigns," he says. "The Cybrid missions are robust and aggressive; the story is dramatic; the pacing is vivid."

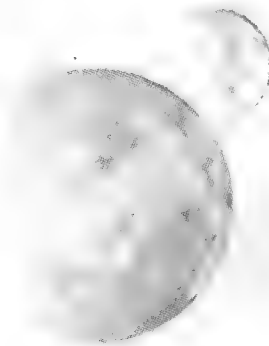
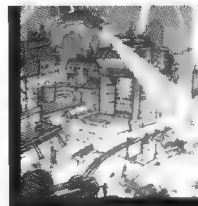
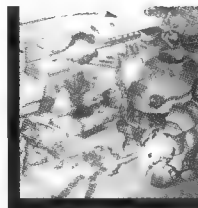
Plus the voices are pretty cool.

The Cybrid campaigns open with a vicious, five-mission siege set on Mercury. The action continues on Luna (Earth's moon), then shifts to Earth. There, campaigns are set in the polar region, the flats of China, and finally the barren desert outside the Human Empire's capital city, Nova Alexandria.

CAMPAIGN: SIEGE 1

Chapter 13

The cold fury of the first Cybrid siege targets Mercury, or “First-World” in glitch lingo. The Core Directive calls for severing communications between Mercury and Earth (called “Home-World\Desire” by Prometheus). Therefore, most of the missions in this campaign entail the destruction of various communications and uplink facilities.



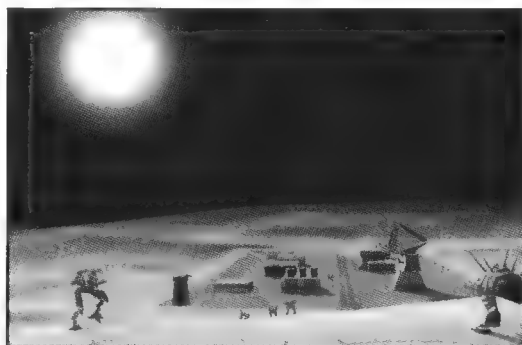
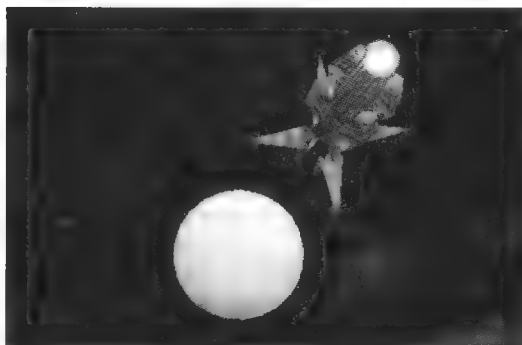


Fig. 13-1. Mercury is the first animal stronghold in your sights.



MISSION: SECURE//INITIATE

PLANET: MERCURY

LOCATION: FIRST WORLD >> SECTOR 0103

Mercury certainly is a cheery place, isn't it? Note that the Cybrid campaign offers immediate access to highly maneuverable vehicles like the Goad and the Seeker. This lets you use maneuverability rather than raw firepower as a primary combat tactic.

Enemies

- ★ 3 Talon
- ★ 1 Disruptor
- ★ 1 Scanning\Construct
- ★ 4 Surveillance\Facility
- ★ 1 Cargo Ship
- ★ 2 Terran Empty Cargo
- ★ 1 Minotaur
- ★ 1 Planetary-Defense\Construct

Recommended Rig Setup

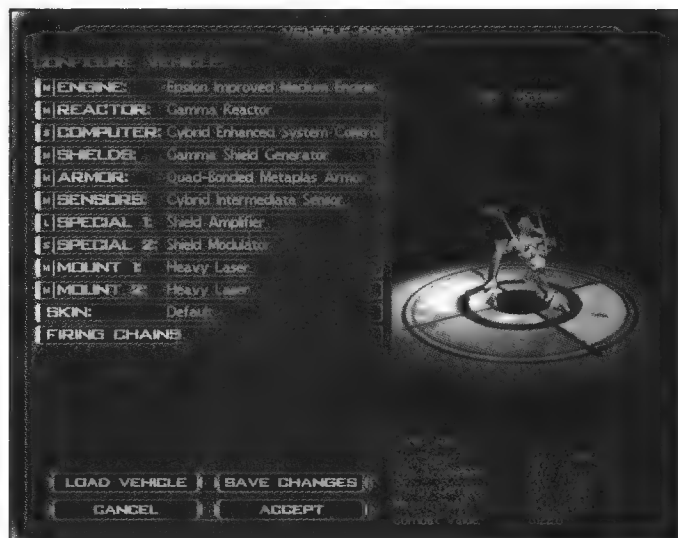


Fig. 13-2.

Here's a good initial setup for your Goad.

Keep the default Goad with its Heavy Lasers, but upgrade to a better sensor such as the Gamma or Beta. The Shield Modulator is good for this mission. But you don't need the ECM Jammer, so dump it for a shield amplifier.

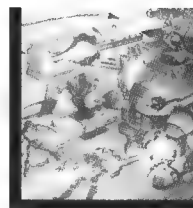
Mission Overview

This is an easy, straightforward mission. Go to the nav points, wipe out everything, the end. However, you can visit the three locations in any order. In fact, it might be easier to go to Nav 002 first. That way, you can face the stiffest combat challenge (a semi-tough Minotaur) while you're still at full health.

But overall, it doesn't make much difference. All enemy vehicles in this mission are saddled by bottom-of-the-barrel pilots. Isn't that the way a starter mission should be?

Mission Walkthrough

How does it feel to be a glitch? Let's use that Shield Modulator. Press **(PAGE UP)** several times to shift shield energy to the front. Then press **(INSERT)** to activate auto-rotation, which keeps the thick part of the shield facing your current target. Now engage the Talon who wants to check out your gear teeth. He's weak. He dies fast. Continue on to Nav 001.



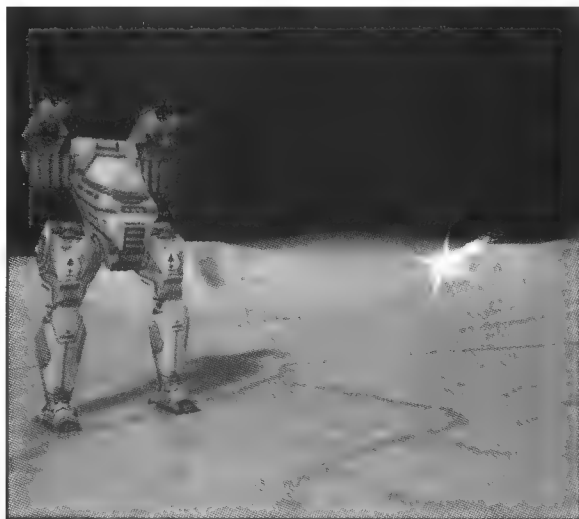


Fig. 13-3.

This Talon becomes your first opponent when he checks out that "meteor strike"—which is, of course, your Drop Pod.

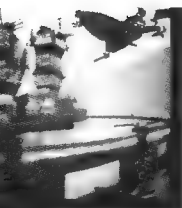
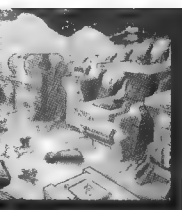
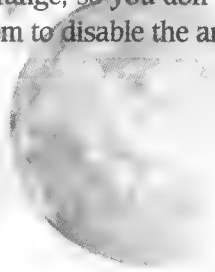


Fig. 13-4.

Don't let Disrupter tanks get this close. They cripple you with their Disrupter weapon, then try to ram your legs.



At Nav 001, you face a relentless little Disrupter tank guarding the communications array atop the ridge. He's tougher than the Talon, but doesn't have much punch. Just don't let him ram your legs. After you sizzle him, snipe at the structures on the ridge. (Your Heavy Lasers have good range, so you don't have to climb up to the communications array.) Destroy two of them to disable the array. Mission objective is complete. Proceed to Nav 002.



WARNING

Your Shield Modulator should keep you well protected, but keep moving to avoid taking the occasional leg shot. You don't want to lose a foot to the Minotaur.

Technically, you don't have to do anything at Nav 002 other than “clear//flush” away enemies. But you're a merciless technoid beast. Kill the cargo ship and the two convoy vehicles. Your first hit on the cargo ship alerts a four-Laser Minotaur who drops in cloaked from the far northeast ridge. Use the Goad's maneuverability to tuck in behind him and carve up his big Minotaur derriere.

As with all AI units, if you hurt the Minotaur enough or take off his weapons, he'll retreat for a while. Don't let him.

You're merciless, remember? Hunt him down. When you hear the animal's satisfying scream of death, move on to Nav 003.

Your objective at Nav 003 is to kill two Talons with rookie pilots and then destroy the Planetary-Defense\Construct (a big siege gun). Once the gun is rubble, press **[1]** to call in your Nexus Dropship and get the heck out.

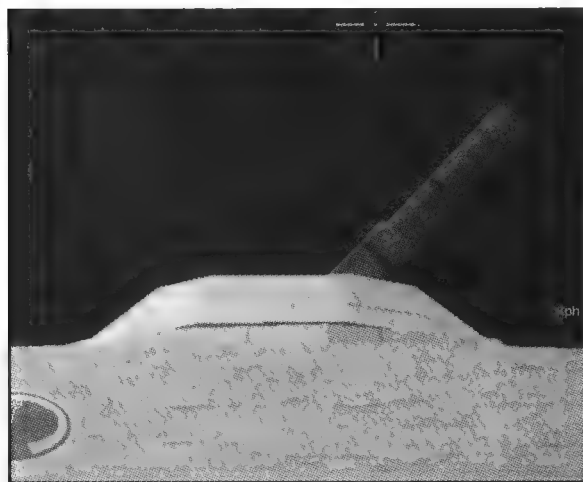


Fig. 13-5.

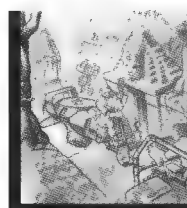
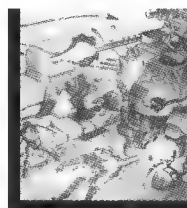
Your primary target at Nav 003 is a huge aerospace defense gun.

MISSION: SEAR//STRIP//ELIMINATE

PLANET: MERCURY

LOCATION: FIRST WORLD >> SECTOR 0103

This mission is unique. Aside from a single Gorgon, all of your hostile targets are turrets—specifically, four laser turrets and five missile turrets.





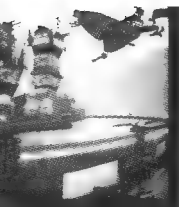
Enemies

- ★ 1 Gorgon
- ★ 4 Laser Turret
- ★ 5 Missile Turret\Construct
- ★ 2 Cargo Ship



Recommended Rig Setup

Keep your Goad but swap your shield amplifier for a Thermal Diffusion Jammer. Turrets in this mission carry heat-seeking missiles. If you try an aggressive attack strategy, you must jam those missiles or die. Keep your Shield Modulator for use against the Gorgon.



Mission Walkthrough

Press **CTRL** + **T** to engage your Thermal Diffusion Jammer. Then set up your Shield Modulator as in the last mission. Direct shields full forward with **PAGE UP**, and hit **INS** to activate shield auto-tracking. Now head toward Nav 001.



Fig. 13-6.

A Gorgon greeting party wants to say hello. Slip in behind the big fellow with your quick Goad and say hello right back, again and again.

Just past the first ridge to your right is a small Command\Facility guarded by a huge Gorgon. This monster is not to be trifled with; he's armed with Twin Blast Cannons and Twin Lasers. Don't engage him head-on; use a zigzag approach. Then use your speed and

maneuverability to get on his tail. Don't let him turn on you! If you get into a circling fight, you'll win because you're much quicker. But if you slug it out toe-to-toe with him, he'll send you home in a box.

After the Gorgon dies, blow up the Command\Facility and bay. It's not necessary, but why not? However, if you destroy the third building (called a "Generator\Construct"), you reap a big benefit. Destroying the generator shuts down the four laser turrets in the bunker ahead.

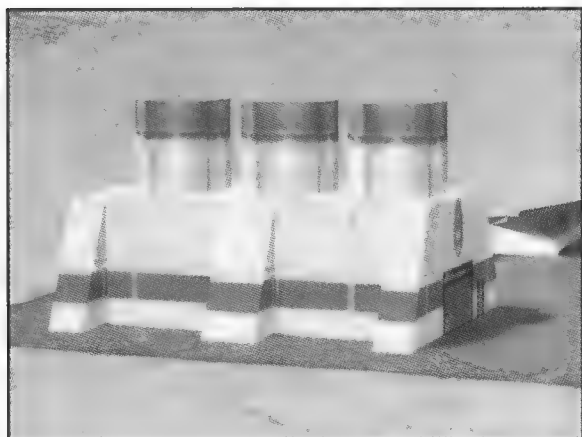


Fig. 13-7.
Destroy this Generator\Construct to offline the four laser turrets in the access tunnel at Nav 001.

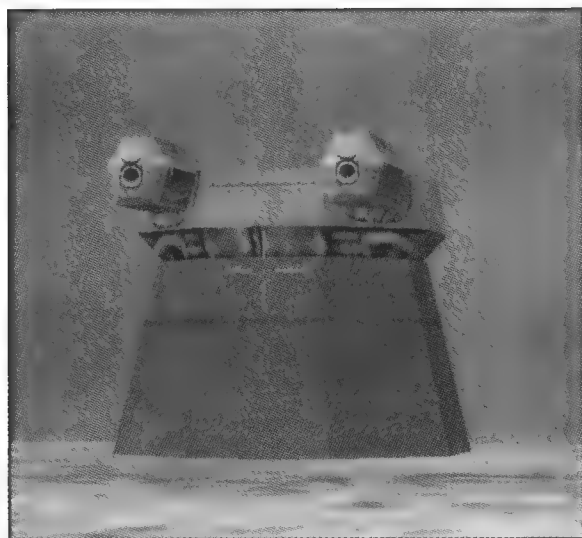
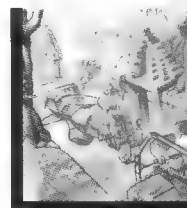
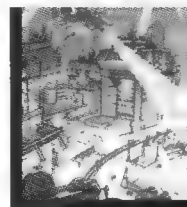
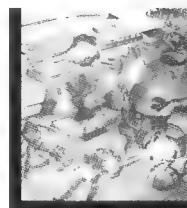


Fig. 13-8.
Have no fear, <Destroyer-of-Animals>. You offlined//emasculated this gun turret when you blew the generator.

Continue on to Nav 001. Enter the access tunnel, blast open the first "Impediment" (Cybrid for "door"), and proceed into the next room. The two turrets look scary, but you offlined them when you toasted the generator. Destroy both turrets, proceed to the next



room, and destroy the two offline turrets there too. Then shoot open the door and move down the exit corridor. Don't rush out into daylight though.

Three deadly missile turrets dominate the basin just beyond the tunnel exit. There's one atop the center hill about 1000 meters ahead, one about 650 meters to the left, and a closer one to the right. You can eradicate all three without dodging a single missile launch. But just to be safe, double-check your Thermal Diffusion Jammer to be sure it's on.

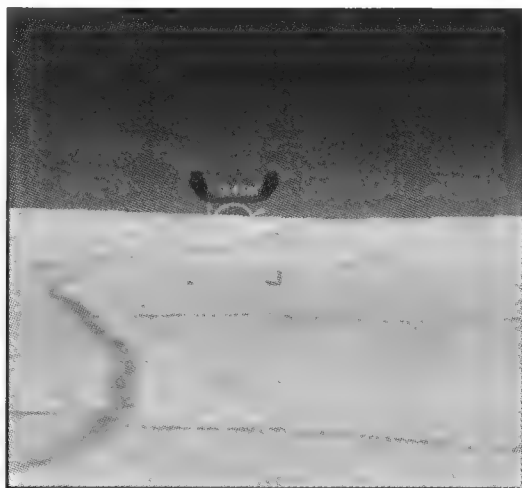


Fig. 13-9. Nail the right-side turret by peeking around the corner. Nail the left-side turret by using Zoom to target its barely visible head.

Creep along the left wall to the end of the corridor. Stop when you can *just* see the right-side missile turret. (See Fig. 13-9.) The turret can't target you here, but it's only 550 meters away—well within your range. Destroy the unsuspecting construct. Then move across the corridor to the right wall and repeat the process with the left-side turret. Your view of most of this turret is cut off by a slope. Use your Zoom key (**Z**) to nail it with precise “head” shots. Finally, creep forward toward the turret on the hill until you're just less than 900 meters away—within the range of your Heavy Lasers. Again, use Zoom to target precisely, and extinguish the turret. *Efficiency recorded.*

Now only two missile turrets remain on the other side of the center hill guarding the two bunker entrances. You can use stealthy, peek-around-corner tactics again, or you can just rush them in a banzai charge. Your Thermal Diffusion Jammer should push most of their missiles off-target.

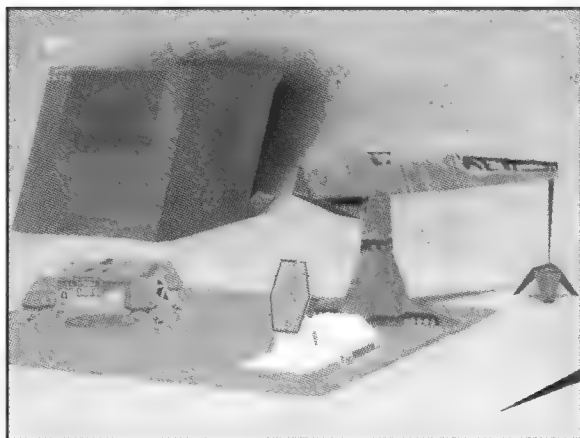


Fig. 13-10.

Be ruthlessly efficient. Blow up the crane, the scanning and surveillance facilities, and any cargo ship on the landing pad. Then enter the bunker to seek your primary mission objective. <Praise Giver-of-Will>!

You don't need to blow up the landing pad structures or cargo ships, but you're a Cybrid. Need I say more?

After the mayhem, enter the nearer bunker. (There are two.) Shoot through the door. Destroy the human animal supplies, but shoot from the entry tunnel to avoid taking blast damage. Some of the boxes are very explosive. Exit, go around the hill to the other bunker entrance, and repeat the process. Again, don't be in the room when the cargo explodes!

When all supplies are destroyed, and your command unit acknowledges your objectives are complete, exit the bunker. Go back through the main entry tunnel (where you blasted the offline laser turrets). Then return to your mobile Nexus at Nav 002.

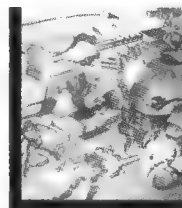
MISSION: SILENCE//DEAFEN

PLANET: MERCURY

LOCATION: FIRST WORLD >> SECTOR 2012

Here's a classic Cybrid-style mission. Your primary objective is to destroy a bunch of structures (or "constructs," in Cybrid-speak). But if you display aggressive efficiency and kill everything that moves, you get a nice bonus for the next mission—a pair of hard-hitting Blasters.

Your first two squadmates join you for this mission. Neither is particularly skilled, but they come in handy against the "animal warforms" you soon meet.





Enemies

- ★ 3 Communication\Facility
- ★ 2 Talon
- ★ 2 Minotaur
- ★ 1 Paladin
- ★ 1 Surveillance\Facility

Recommended Rig Setup

Keep your Goad. Trade your Thermal Diffuser for an ECM Jammer. You will face a Paladin with two six-packs of Sparrow missiles. Then trade your Shield Modulator for a shield amplifier. You fight several opponents at once, so the Modulator won't help.

Recruit squadmate <Eats-Only-Heads> and put him in a Goad with an Alpha ECM Jammer. Recruit <Chooser-of-Tactics> and give him your only vehicle choice, a speedy Seeker. Switch from the default Autocannons to two Heavy Lasers and give him a slightly larger reactor. Be sure he has an Alpha ECM Jammer too.

Mission Walkthrough

Proceed to Nav 001. As you approach, target the first of the three Communication\Facilities. When you shoot it (or just get within about 800 meters), the facility detects you. It then calls for the cavalry—a pair of Talons (nearby) and a pair of Minotaurs (patrolling the area). Destroy the structure and continue to Nav 001. Try to nail the second Communication\Facility before the Talons arrive.



Fig. 13-11.
What a handsome bunch. Your newly formed squad is a swift pack of hunters.



Fig. 13-12.

Destroy this Communication Facility near Nav 001. Two more lie just over the ridge.

TIP

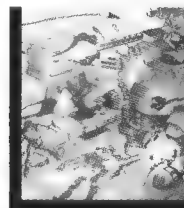
Keep your cars open. Much of the fun of the game is the idle chatter of your Cybrid squadmates.

Your squad is swift. You could outrun the defenders and just hit the designated structures at Navs 001 and 002. But as mentioned, you earn a nice Blaster bonus if you complete the secondary objective by wiping out all base resistance.

The Talons usually come first, one armed with Lasers, the other with Autocannons. Your team should handle them easily if you concentrate fire. (Target a Talon, press **[F4]** and then **[1]** to order all squadmates to attack your target.) The Minotaurs, however, are another story. These are brutes, particularly the one with the pair of EMP shield rippers. Send your squad after one to draw his attention. Then slip in behind and fry him. Repeat this tactic on the other Minotaur.

After the Minotaurs are dusted, destroy all three Communication Facilities near Nav 001. Then proceed to Nav 002.

Be sure your ECM Jammer is engaged. (Press **[CTRL] + [J]**.) Nav 002 marks another base with another construct to kill, guarded by a Paladin with Sparrow missiles. If your squadmates are still alive, your combined fire should eliminate this defender quickly. Then lay waste to the base. Your specific target is the Surveillance Facility.





When all is beautiful wreckage, you are directed to proceed to Nav 003 for extraction.
Acknowledge. Submit. Kick ass.

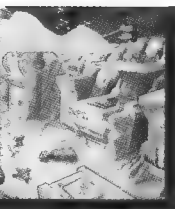


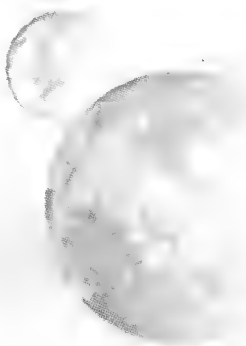
Fig. 13-13.
Goads are lightning-quick. Send squadmates to distract targets; then maneuver in behind for the kill.

MISSION: INEFFICIENCY >> DEATH\\HARM

War demands a certain amount of improvisation, and this mission calls for you to react to a rapidly changing scenario. A sudden threat to your mobile Nexus wipes out your original set of mission objectives.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Basilisk
- ★ 2 Minotaur
- ★ 1 Disrupter
- ★ 3 Talon



Recommended Rig Setup

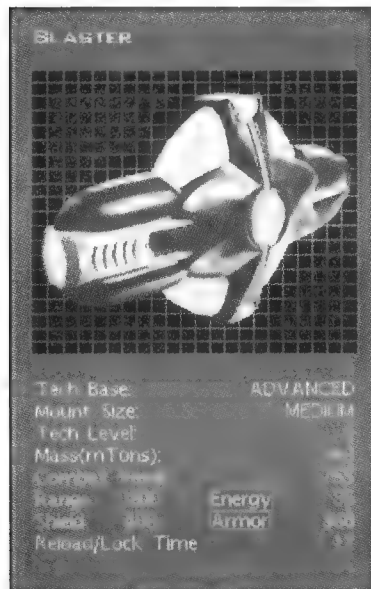


Fig. 13-14.

Blasters are a big step up in your weapons mix.

By all means, swap your Goad's Heavy Lasers for the new available pair of Blasters if you completed your secondary objective in the last mission.

You get a third squadmate. Pick Plague Dog (or, as he spells it, <pLaGue-DoG>). His chatter is quite entertaining. Don't miss his biography in the Pilot Summary. Give him the Goad and be sure he has an Alpha ECM Jammer.

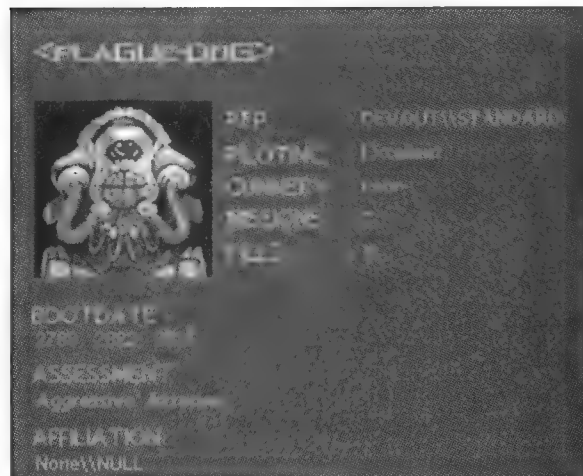
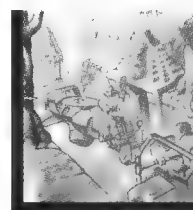
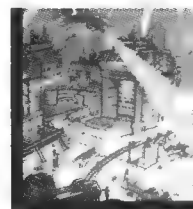
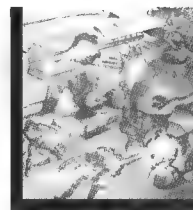


Fig. 13-15.

With the addition of the always-amusing <pLaGue-DoG>, you are now a squad of four.





Mission Walkthrough

Here's a little cheat. As the mission opens, ignore the Nav 001 on your HUD. Veer right instead and head to the northeast canyon pass. About twenty seconds later, you learn your mobile Nexus is under attack. You are issued a new primary objective—defend the Nexus. You also get a new Nav 001, which happens to be in the direction you just veered.



Fig. 13-16.

Your initial primary objective (to destroy human communications uplinks) goes to hell in a hand-basket.

Hit **T** to target your first enemy, a Basilisk. Concentrated fire from your squad should knock him down quickly. (Your new Blasters punch nice and hard.) Then hustle at full speed to Nav 001. Prepare to face three separate waves of animal attackers besieging the Nexus.

When you arrive, Cybrid Bolo tanks guarding the Nexus are tangling with the first wave, two Minotaurs seeking to “harm//desecrate” the huge mobile link. If you arrive full force, you have them well outnumbered. So send your whole squad after one and join in the fray.

The second wave attacks from a random direction and features another Basilisk and a Disrupter tank. This can be a tough combo. The tank's Disrupter weapon zaps your engine, slowing you to a crawl. Then the tank rams your vulnerable legs with its Electrohull component. Advice: Concentrate fire first on the Basilisk, which is more heavily armed. But keep an eye on the tank. If it comes close, run fast!

The final wave brings three Talons. Talons are swift, but not as swift as your squad. These Talons are well-armed, however. One carries two Compression Lasers, and the others have Autocannons and EMPs. EMPs tear down shields quickly, and Autocannons chew up armor, so it's a serious confrontation. But you win in the end, of course.

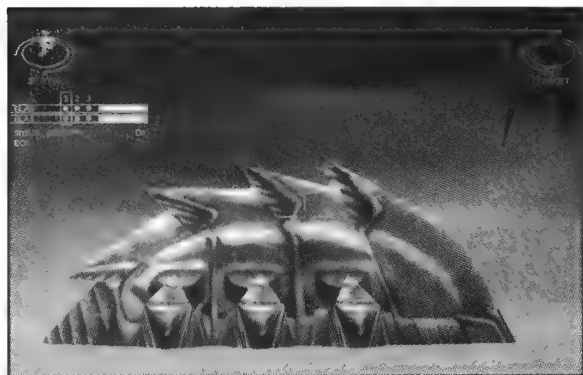


Fig. 13-17.

Your new, sole objective: Save the Nexus from animal tenacity.

MISSION: DESTROY//DENY

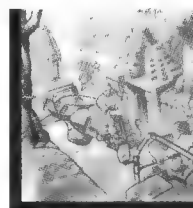
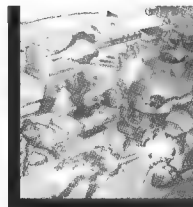
PLANET: MERCURY

LOCATION: FINAL ASSAULT ZONE

This is a great Hybrid mission. Multiple tasks and objectives keep you on your toes as you lead your squad into a heavily defended Imperial evacuation site. Spot for artillery, skirmish with tough defense units, pick off transport ships, and target critical base structures, all with the clock ticking. Best of all, you finally get a substantial vehicle, a Shepherd, to ride on this mission.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Generator\Construct
- ★ 1 Communication\Facility
- ★ 1 Command\Facility
- ★ 4 Turret
- ★ 4 Escape Ship
- ★ 1 Basilisk
- ★ 2 Minotaur
- ★ 2 Apocalypse
- ★ 1 Gorgon
- ★ 1 Paladin
- ★ Optional: Various other structures and facilities





Recommended Rig Setup

Dump your Goad for the Shepherd and let out a synthesized cheer. At last, something that can brawl! This is especially true when you replace the default Twin Lasers with your Blasters. The Eta shield generator is awesome too, and the Gamma sensor gives you advanced auto-targeting.



Fig. 13-18.

It's nice to saddle up a substantial piece of technology like the Shepherd.

Very important: Replace the Shield Capacitor with the LTADS. You can't spot for your artillery on this mission without LTADS. Install an Alpha ECM Jammer too. Several animal vehicles carry missiles.

Give your old Goad to whichever teammate has the Seeker. Be sure each of your squad-mates has an ECM Jammer too.



Mission Overview

Big laser turrets guard the Imperial evac site. By now you know that generators power defense turrets. When the generator blows, the turrets go offline. So your first task is to use LTADS to spot the two base generators for your "artillery warforms."

Lots of other structures dot the site. But aside from the generators, there are only two other targets you must destroy to complete the primary objective. These are the Command Facility in the lower base and the Communication Facility atop the ridge.



Fig. 13-19.

Cybrid artillery awaits targeting coordinates. Use your LTADS to spot for the big guns.

Mission Walkthrough

First off, hit **CTRL** + **J** to engage your ECM Jammer. The missiles fly in this mission. Then proceed to Nav 001, the Imperial Trooper Evacuation Site that you seek to destroy. As you approach, drop pods streak across the sky. These unload your artillery units, which take up position nearby.

Stop on the ridge overlooking the base. Immediately target one of the two Generator\Constructs on the hillside to the right. (See Fig. 13-20.) Press **S** to spot the generator for your artillery. (This only works if you have the LTADS special component.)



Fig. 13-20.

This overview shows all primary objective targets in the boxes. The Command\Facility is in the target reticle at far left. The two generators sit on the hill at lower right. The Communication\Facility sits atop the ridge at the far upper right.

When the first artillery shells hit the generator, a missile-firing Basilisk runs up the ridge to attack you. Did you engage your jammer earlier? Wait until the artillery barrage destroys the first generator. (If you break your target lock from the generator, the artillery





loses the spot.) Then target the Basilisk and order your squad to attack him. Chances are good they'll destroy him. Then you can spot the other generator for your artillery.

After the second generator is destroyed by the bombardment, swoop down toward the base. A Minotaur runs out to meet you. Kill him quickly with concentrated fire. Then start targeting the Escape Ships. Kill them quickly too. They'll start taking off one at a time if you don't get them now. Plus, a big Apocalypse with missiles and blazing guns attacks from the far side of the base. Try to nail three Escape Ships before the Apocalypse gets on your tail. Once you've knocked out three, you have completed your secondary objective.

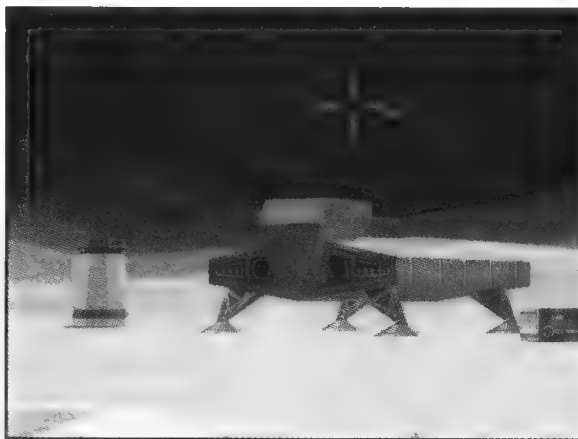
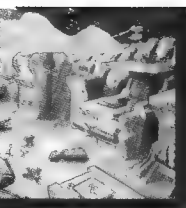


Fig. 13-21.

Destroy three of these Escape Ships to complete your secondary objective.

Dust the Apocalypse. Now, if you executed the previous directives efficiently, you have a few seconds to lay waste to the base. Your squadmates automatically demolish the turrets, being too stupid to perceive them as offline. But your primary target is the Command Facility.

Soon, the first wave of animal would-be liberators appears—another Apocalypse and a little Paladin. Send your squad screaming at the Apocalypse; you can more or less ignore the tank until the big guy's dead. Then concentrate on the Paladin.

Now it's time to wrap up this little party. Sprint up the ridge to the communications complex. Tip: Before you reach the top, hit **F4** and then **7** to order your squad to halt. You don't want them running into the complex ahead of you. Here's why: If you step on any of the whitish "concrete" areas in the communications complex, you trigger the attack of a massive Gorgon defender.

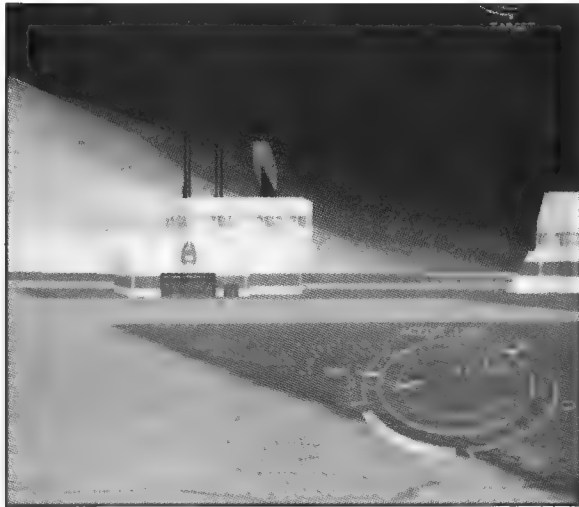


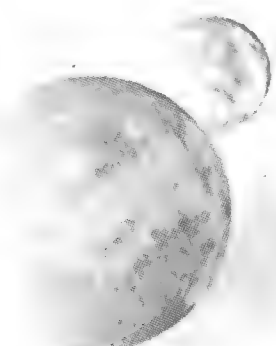
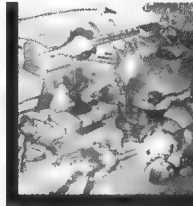
Fig. 13-22.

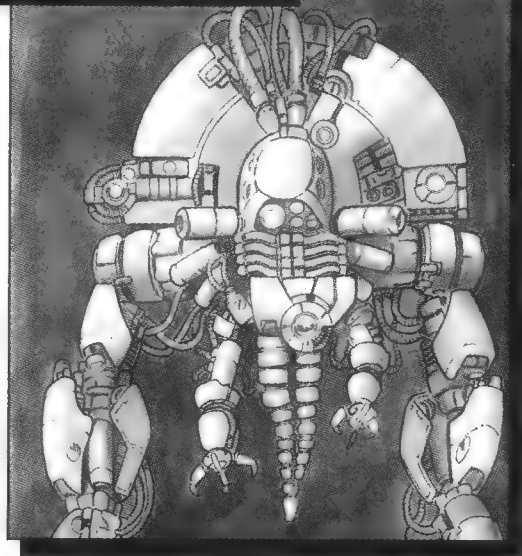
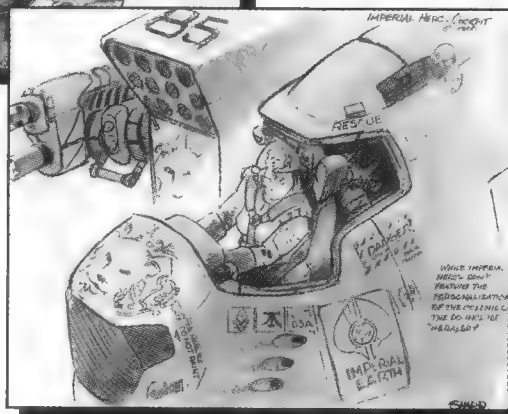
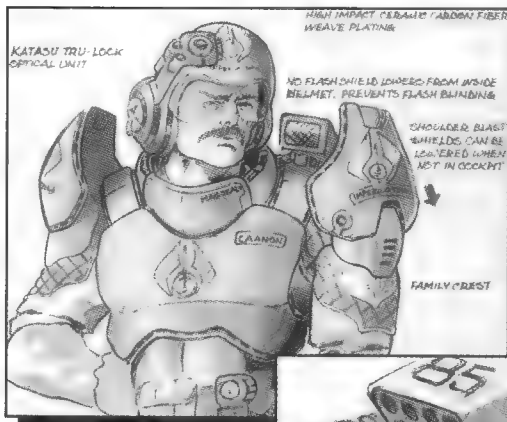
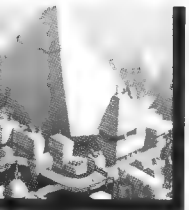
Here's a primary target: The Communication\\Facility in the complex atop the ridge.

Instead, stop just over the ridgetop and destroy the Communication\\Facility from a good distance. This completes a primary mission objective and avoids a totally unnecessary fight with a big, bad animal warform.

If you nail the Communication\\Facility soon enough, you can avoid more waves of defenders. Chances are you'll have to fight the Minotaur that runs in alone. If you kill him quickly and have destroyed all primary targets (the two generators and the Command and Communication\\Facilities) you can avoid the five more Talons who will run in one at a time, sixty seconds apart.

Let's get off this hellhole of a planet, shall we?

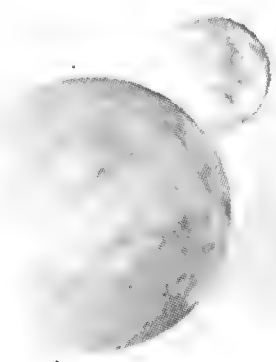
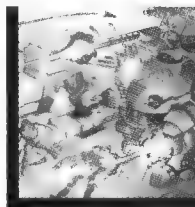




CAMPAIGN: SIEGE 2

Chapter 14

So you've followed Neil Armstrong to the moon, better known as "Third-World\Subordinate." Luna is swarming with human\animal facilities and warforms. But as your squadmate <pLaGue-DoG> would say, "Happiness is a bunch of smokin' human steaks!"



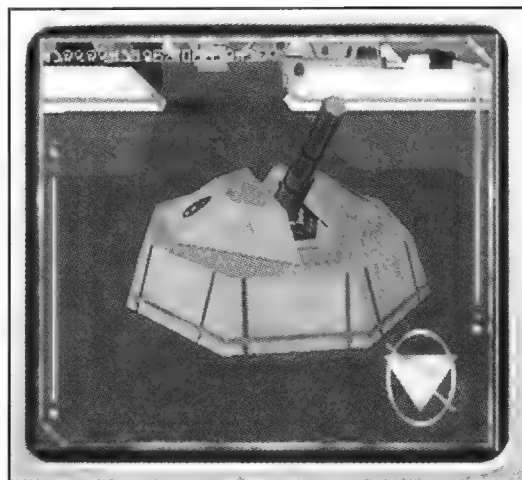


Fig. 14-1. Your next targets are the spaceports and anti-orbital guns on Earth's moon, Luna.

MISSION: DISARM//NEUTRALIZE

PLANET: MOON

LOCATION: SECTOR 007

Your job here is to “disarm//neutralize” huge anti-orbital guns that keep the NEXT from landing in force on the moon. To do so, you must attack a heavily defended base and knock out the generators that power the guns. Four huge turrets guard the base itself. In addition, five Minotaurs and a Paladin patrol the base perimeter.

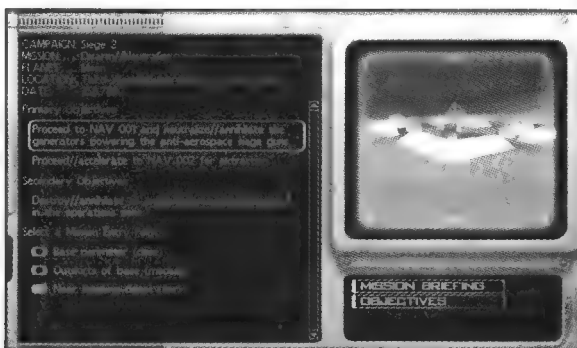


Fig. 14-2.

This mission offers a selection of three different entry points into the zone of operations. Each calls for a different strategy.

This operation adds a unique twist to mission strategy. You can choose one of three entry points into the zone around the base. Each offers a different set of tactical considerations. In fact, the third (and farthest) entry point demands an entirely new vehicle configuration.

Enemies

- ★ 1 Paladin
- ★ 5 Minotaur
- ★ 4 Generator\Construct
- ★ 4 Anti-Orbital Gun
- ★ 4 Turret\Construct

Recommended Rig Setup

Three entry points to the zone of operations require three optimal vehicle configurations.

CLOSE ENTRY POINT

No doubt about it, you need your Shepherd for this drop. Dump the LTADS from the last mission and add a shield amplifier. Keep your Twin Blasters and Twin Electro-Mag Auto-cannons for good punch when you hit the generators. Upgrade your armor to Depleted Uranium Carapace (DURAC). If you need extra tonnage, downgrade your engine to the Theta and dump your ECM Jammer. You won't face missiles, and you won't require top speed for this close drop.

Keep your squadmates in Goads armed with Heavy Lasers.

MEDIUM ENTRY POINT

Duplicate all Close Entry Point configurations. However, keep your Shepherd's faster Iota engine and downgrade your reactor to make up the tonnage deficit.

FAR ENTRY POINT

Outfit a Seeker with a Turbine Booster and a good pair of armor-piercing weapons to smack the non-shielded base structures. At this point, your two best armor-busters are Blasters and Nano-Infusers. Take your pick. Nano-Infusers are much lighter than Blasters (2.5 tons versus 4.0 tons) and hit non-shielded targets nearly as hard. But Blasters hit from much farther away. So you can save crucial seconds by hitting the first generator on your approach run rather than waiting for close-range targeting. Best of all, Blasters have unlimited ammo.

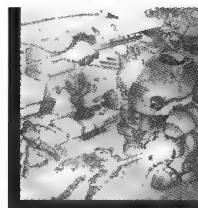




Fig. 14-3.

If you try the "speed rush" from the Far Entry Point, outfit a Seeker with Blasters, a Turbine Booster, and little else.

If you choose Blasters for your Seeker, you'll have to make all other components as light as possible. Add a Battery if you can. Blasters drain a light reactor very quickly.

Mission Overview

Again, three entry points are available for this mission. Each one calls for a different strategy. The first two demand different combat approaches. The third demands speed and efficiency.

NOTE

To complete the secondary mission objective, you must destroy the six defense vehicles (five Minotaurs and a Paladin tank). You must also eliminate the four gun turrets in the corners of the base.

The first entry point leaves you closest to your primary objective, the generators that power the anti-aerospace guns. It also drops you right into the heat of battle, forcing you to use brute force to charge your way to the target. You probably have to kill all defenders before you can go for the base.

The second drop point leaves you farther from your objective but also farther from enemy forces. It gives you time to think things through and deploy your squadmates more intelligently.

The third drop point leaves you farthest from the gun generators, which can be problematic because this is a timed mission. (Upon entry, you have 6:15 to complete the mission.)

However, this entry point allows you to try a cool speed tactic, which is the preferred choice of many Dynamix testers and designers.

Mission Walkthrough

Again, you can choose one of three entry points into the operations zone. Therefore, this section features three separate mission walkthroughs.

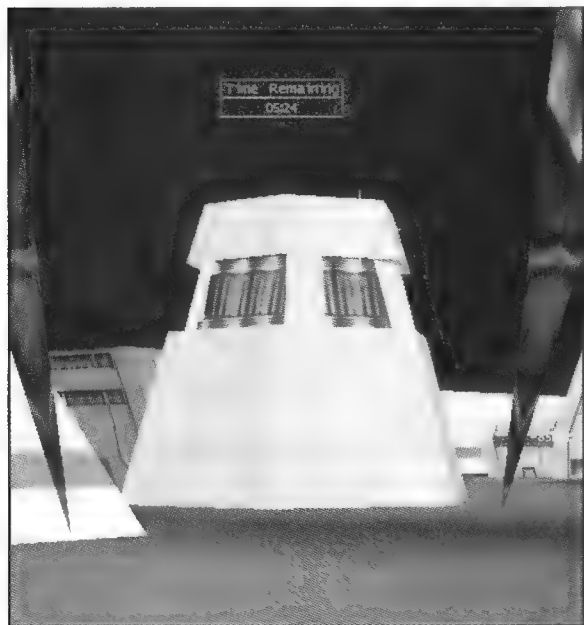
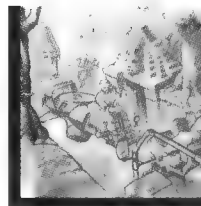
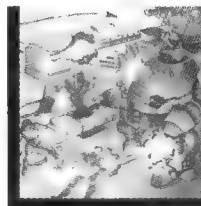


Fig. 14-4.

Here's what you're gunning for—the generators that power the big anti-orbital guns.



NEAR ENTRY (BASE PERIMETER)

This entry calls for straightforward gunplay. The moment you drop, a Paladin hits your position. After you gang-tackle him, a Minotaur sprints in from the right. When he's dust, head to the right of the base to gun down two more Minotaurs. (They're posted about 1000 meters west of the base.)

Now make a beeline to the base. Start taking out the generators, but beware the four Autocannon gun turrets. (Assign your squad to hit those if you want.) In the meantime, your attack on the generators calls in one last Minotaur patrol, a duo. Try to destroy as many generators as you can before the Minotaurs arrive. Then turn on them full force with your team.

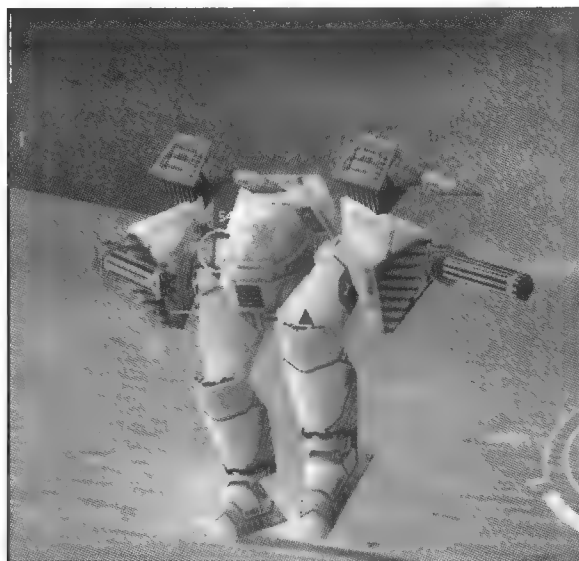


Fig. 14-5.

Other than one Paladin tank, all of your foes in this mission are Minotaurs.

Once the final Minotaur pair is black scrap, eviscerate the remaining generators. (Hurry! By now your timer is running low.) Again, watch out for the turrets as you mop up.

Once the generators are dead, take out any remaining turrets. Then your work is done. Head for the extraction coordinates at Nav 002.

MIDDLE ENTRY (BASE OUTSKIRTS)

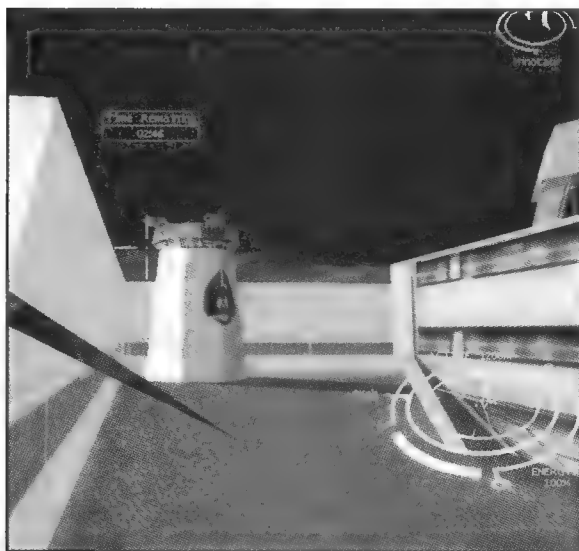


Fig. 14-6.

Four gun turrets armed with big Autocannons will chew you up unless you find the "dead zones" in the base.



This entry point drops your squad about 2000 meters east of the base, out of enemy sight—but not for long. Two Minotaurs northeast of the base detect you and come running. Take them down and continue to the base. You should have time to destroy most of the generators before the remaining base defenders (a Minotaur, a Paladin, and a two-Minotaur patrol) return.

FAR ENTRY (NEAR LISTENING DEPOT)

Let's be totally honest. If you choose this entry point, you probably won't accomplish your secondary objective, which is to annihilate all animal resistance in the operations zone. However, this approach is so much fun you won't care.

At the third and farthest entry point, immediately order your squadmates to halt. (Press [F4] then [7].) Then sprint alone toward Nav 001, leaving your Goad buddies behind where no one will molest them. Hit your Turbine button for regular boosts of speed. (You can get above 300 kph easily.)

As you approach the base, open fire on the nearest generator. When it dies, the alert goes out to the six base defenders on the perimeter. Hurry! Knock out the other three generators. Seek dead zones where the gun turrets' line of fire is cut off.

When the last generator explodes, use your Turbine Booster to sprint *east* from the base. That's right, head in the *opposite* direction from your extraction point at Nav 002. You must have a 1500-meter "enemy-free" radius at Nav 002 before you can be extracted. If the Imperials chase you there directly from the base, they will probably get within that radius. Then you'll be stranded at the nav marker... thoroughly unequipped to fight a heavy battle.

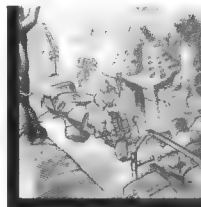
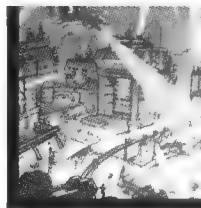
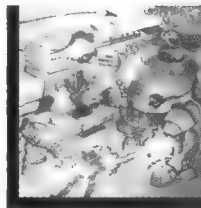
Lead chasers to a point several thousand yards to the east of Nav 002. Then wait. When all six Imperial defenders finally converge on you, use your Turbine Booster to sprint right past them. Continue Turbo-boosting your sprint to Nav 002. When you arrive, the base defenders will be more than 1500 yards behind you, and your mission will end successfully.

MISSION: STARVE//DEMORALIZE

PLANET: MOON

LOCATION: SECTOR 0323

You gotta love a mission that calls for you to "purge//mulch all animal convoys." Your primary objective here is to destroy a weapons depot in a base at Nav 001. On the way, you



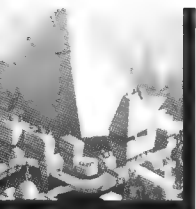
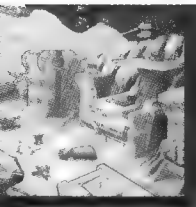


encounter a number of convoys. Your complicated Cybrid directive: *Wipe them out.* As your buddy <pLaGue-DoG> would say, "Visualize mass destruction."

Stay sharp though. This mission tosses you a new primary objective in short order.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Terran Personnel Cargo
- ★ 1 Suppressor
- ★ 1 Terran Fuel Cargo
- ★ 5 Paladin
- ★ 1 Terran Big Ammo Cargo
- ★ 1 Disrupter
- ★ 2 Terran Ammo Cargo
- ★ 1 Terran Minotaur Cargo
- ★ 1 Myrmidon
- ★ 1 Supply\Construct
- ★ 1 Generator\Construct
- ★ 1 Gathering
- ★ 1 Hub\Macro-Nest



Recommended Rig Setup

TIP

Note that all of your armed opponents in this mission are tanks—a Myrmidon, a Disrupter, a Suppressor, and five Paladins. Therefore you and your squad should lead up on armor-husting weapons.

Hey, another Shepherd. Give it to the squadmate with the best Gunnery rating. (You're doubling the number of guns he fires, so you want a good marksman.)

Equip him with Heavy Autocannons and EMCs for this tank-heavy mission. Add a Thermal Diffusion Jammer and a shield amplifier if they're available. Downgrade his sensor to save space if necessary.

As for yourself, be sure you swap your Alpha ECM for a Thermal Diffusion Jammer. You face a couple of Paladins loaded with heat-seeking Pit Viper missiles,

which pack a hefty punch. Like your new Shepherd partner, you need tank-busting weapons. Keep your almighty Blasters, but add a pair of Nano-Infusers. A Universal Ammo Pack might help too, but it might be hard to shed enough tonnage elsewhere to squeeze it in.



Fig. 14-7.

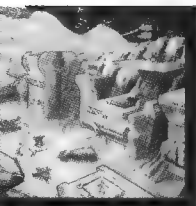
The Recluse can carry a pair of big ol' guns like Plasma Cannons or Particle Beam Weapons. Give one to a squadmate.

Switch another squadmate to the Recluse tank. Hang either two Plasma Cannons (which fire seeking projectiles) or two Particle Beam Weapons (which inflict 540 points of armor damage) on its two large weapon mounts. Both weapon types are heavy, so make space by downgrading sensors and dumping unnecessary components such as the Turbine Booster.





If you can give *all* squadmates a Thermal Diffusion Jammer, do so. However, chances are you won't have enough to go around. If so, don't be emotional. You're a Cybrid, dammit. You must be efficient and give one to yourself first. Give a second one to the Recluse pilot because he has no shields, and missiles whump hard on armor.



Mission Overview

This mission opens with a single primary objective—destroy the weapons depot at Nav 001—then adds a second one about 140 seconds into the mission. The added primary objective: Destroy a convoy carrying “priority materials” from the base at Nav 001.

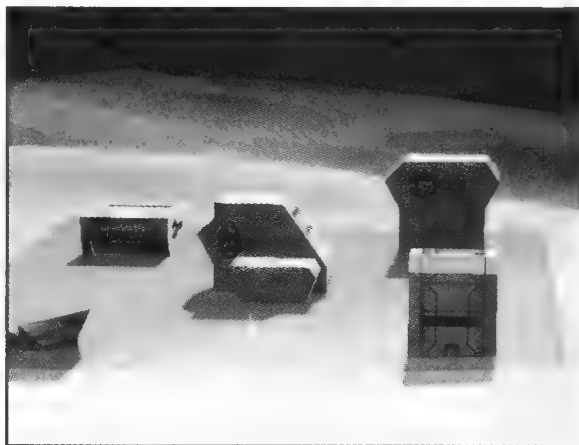
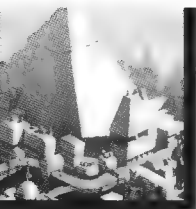


Fig. 14-8.

Destroy this weapons depot (all four buildings) at Nav 001 to complete one primary objective.



Your secondary objective is to “purge//mulch” all convoys you find in the area. Four of them lie along your route (more or less) into the base at Nav 001. Another waits at the base; this one is the priority convoy you must eliminate.

Mission Walkthrough

As the mission opens, the first convoy should be within your targeting range. A Suppressor vehicle escorts a Terran Fuel Cargo and a Terran Personnel Cargo. Prey savagely on these. Each will (as <PLAGUE-DOG> says) “fall down, go boom” quickly.

Check your radar or Satellite Map to find the second convoy, a Terran Big Ammo Cargo vehicle escorted by two Paladins. This group is a bit tougher. One Paladin carries twin ELFs, which can slice you to pieces at short range. Keep a healthy distance from this fellow. The other Paladin carries Autocannons, which aren't much of a threat to your shielded Shepherd yet.

**Fig. 14-9.**

Five Paladin tanks prowl through this mission. Anti-armor weapons like Nano-Infusers will rip tanks apart swiftly.

The third convoy is a Terran Ammo Cargo escorted by a Disrupter tank. A fourth convoy, another Paladin and a Terran Minotaur Cargo, is within striking range near the base. None of these combinations is hard to find or shred. However, before you destroy all four convoys, you'll probably receive the new primary objective: Destroy a "priority convoy" leaving the base.

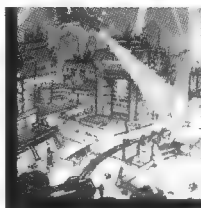
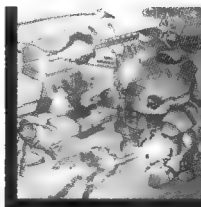
When you get this message, wrap up the fight. Squeeze off a few more shots at your current target and hustle to Nav 001. The priority convoy of two vehicles exits the far side of the depot. There's one Terran Personnel Cargo (carrying "priority supplies") and one Terran Ammo Cargo (carrying "turret supplies").

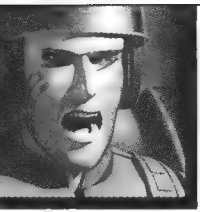
**Fig. 14-10.**

About two minutes into the mission, a two-vehicle convoy full of "priority supplies" tries to slip out the back door of the depot. You know what to do.

Be careful as you near the depot area. A hulking Myrmidon tank and two Paladins with Pit Viper missile racks stand guard here. (Here's where you need that Thermal Diffusion Jammer.) Ignore them for now and hit the convoy. Target each cargo carrier, press **[I]** to scan and verify its priority cargo, and then destroy it.

Once the priority convoy is blasted into lunar dust, return to help your squadmates mop up any remaining animal vehicles. Then destroy all four of the depot buildings to complete your primary objectives.





MISSION: GROUND//DISRUPT

PLANET: MOON

LOCATION: TARGET 478 (SPACEPORT)



We're Cybrids now. So it's not enough to win. We must also defenestrate//vaporize every animal we can lay our cyber-mitts on. (In case you didn't know, "defenestration" means "a throwing of a person or a thing out of a window." Cool!) To completely shatter the animals' morale we must destroy their spaceports. This traps them on Luna, so they have to sit around watching TV and wondering when our medical experiments will begin.

This mission can be a whole different ball game. Without careful tactics, it can turn into a vicious urban firefight. It's up close and personal in a dark lunar spaceport against three squads of enemy Hercs and four ugly gun turrets. These aren't good odds, not even for a Hardened\\Efficient unit like yourself.



Enemies

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ★ 2 Terran Big Ammo Cargo | ★ Various dropships, cargo ships |
| ★ 1 Terran Ammo Cargo | ★ 1 Anti-Orbital Gun |
| ★ 3 Terran Personnel Cargo | ★ 1 Generator\\Construct |
| ★ 1 Gorgon | ★ 1 Silo |
| ★ 2 Basilisk | ★ 2 Hub\\Macro-Nest |
| ★ 4 Turret\\Construct | ★ 4 Storage\\Construct |
| ★ 5 Talon | ★ 1 Refinery\\Construct |
| ★ 2 Minotaur | ★ 2 Uplink\\Construct |
| ★ 2 Terran Fuel Cargo | ★ 1 Command\\Facility |
| ★ 2 Terran Utility Truck | ★ 1 Surveillance\\Facility |

Recommended Rig Setup

Keep all vehicles from the last mission. Switch back to a more balanced set of weapons. Add shield rippers to replace some of the armor busters you carried on the last mission. On your own Shepherd, dump the Nano-Infusers and add a pair of EMPs to your all-purpose Blasters.

You must blow up six convoy vehicles, ten enemy Hercs, four defense turrets, and at least 12 spaceport structures in this mission. You need *lots* of ammo. Install energy weapons with their unlimited ammo supply, or give Universal Ammo Packs (which double the ammo supply) to any vehicle carrying ammo-firing weapons.

Mission Overview

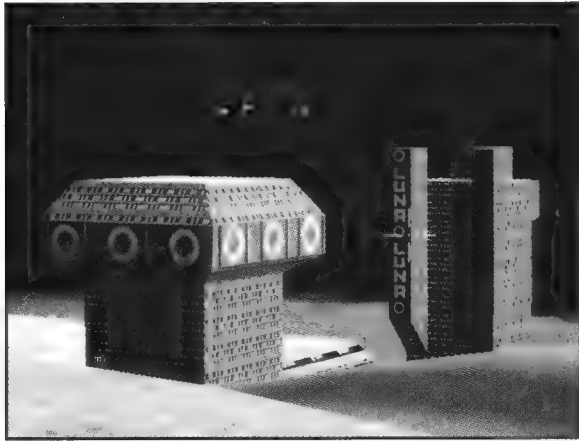


Fig. 14-11.

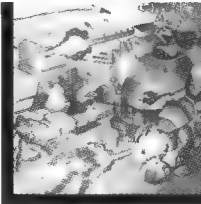
Your priority target, the spaceport, is huge and well-defended. This view is a Zoom shot from 1500 meters away.

Your goal is to cleanse//crush the human\\animal resistance. You must knock out the spaceport defense force (several Hercs and four gun turrets). You must also shatter at least 12 of the base structures—command and communications uplinks, an anti-orbital gun, a generator, various storage facilities, etc.

Note that three laser turrets sit outside the spaceport—one at the south entrance, one at the west entrance, and one at the north entrance. An Autocannon turret sits just inside the west entrance. These turrets can direct fearsome firepower on your squad, but they're all weakly armored. Three or four double-barrel Blaster hits can take each turret down.

Mission Walkthrough

See all those red dots on your radar? Upon mission entry, immediately veer right and rush over the ridge to wipe out a big convoy. Smashing the convoy's cargo is worthwhile because it's fun. This convoy features six fat cargo carriers escorted by a Gorgon and two Basilisks—a truly formidable escort trio.



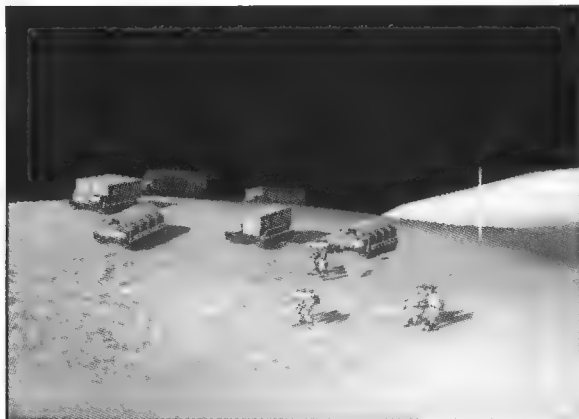
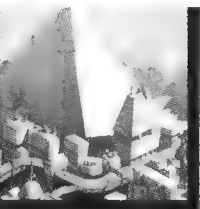
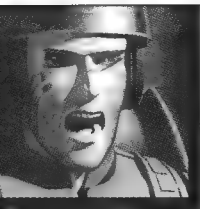


Fig. 14-12.

Three big Hercs escort that six-vehicle convoy, so it must carry good stuff. Send your squad at the Hercs and sprint after the cargo. You won't have much time to hit them, so hurry!

The moment you hit, the cargo units run over a hill, daring you to hunt them down. Send your squad after the nearest escort (usually the Gorgon) and *sprint* after the convoy, shooting fast. Hurry! You don't have long to slice up these helpless hogs. As you wander away from Nav 001, you get orders to readjust your bearing: "You are off course. Inefficient." If you continue to hunt cargo vehicles after this warning, the mission ends in a most unceremonious manner.

Head north toward the spaceport at Nav 001. Here's a tip: Three Herc squads patrol the base perimeter. If you rush into the spaceport, you trigger an alarm that brings all three enemy squads rushing home. You end up outnumbered in what mission coordinator Graeme Bayless calls "a knife fight in the dark."

But you can avoid this mass mayhem. Keep your distance and work around the *outside* of the spaceport. Pick off turrets and snipe port structures through the four entrances using your Blasters and their 1200-meter range. If you do this, the alarm never sounds. Then you can circle the perimeter and confront each of the three enemy squads one at a time. As always, the smart strategy is to divide and conquer.

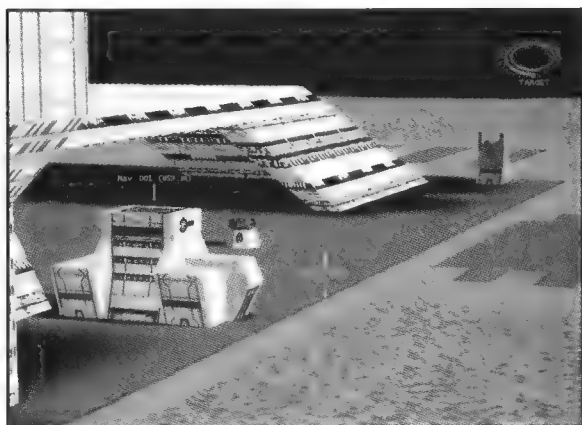
Here's how it works:

As you near the spaceport, veer right (northeast). First, hit the three Talons roosting on a ridge to the northeast of the port. Talons are never particularly tough if you have them outgunned, and these are no exception. When this first squad is eliminated, head toward Nav 001 to approach the base.

Sit on a ridge overlooking the base from the northeast. From here, your Blasters can reach the northern gun turret, the refinery, and the surveillance facility. You can also hit a storage construct and the generator inside the spaceport if you shoot through the western port entry arch.

**Fig. 14-13.**

Circle the spaceport and engage the three base defense patrols one at a time. This squad of three Talons is posted to the northeast.

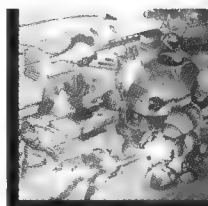
**Fig. 14-14.**

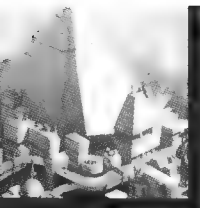
Use Blasters to snipe at base structures from a distance. This Zoom view from the northeast ridge lets you pick off the refinery, a turret, and the surveillance facility.

TIP

Turret busting is where the true beauty of Blaster fire shines through. With a range of 1200 meters, Blasters let you hit dangerous gun turrets long before the turrets can hit you.

Now head west along the edge of the basin. Turn left and approach the spaceport until you're about 600 meters from Nav 001 with a good view through the northern entry arch. From here, you can pick off three more storage constructs and a silo. When you're finished sniping, turn back north and return to the ridge, about 1000 meters from Nav 001.





TIP

This circling and sniping technique can be undermined by overeager squadmates who run into the spaceport to hit targets. Keep them under control by ordering them to form on you as you move around the base perimeter. When you set up to snipe at targets, order squadmates to halt (press **F4**) and then **[X]**.

Continue circling the spaceport, moving west and keeping about 1000 yards away. When you get past the port's corner, you'll see the two western gun turrets, two Uplink\Constructs, and a Command\Facility. Wipe them out from long range with your Blasters. Hit the turrets first; then move about 200 meters closer to nail other targets.

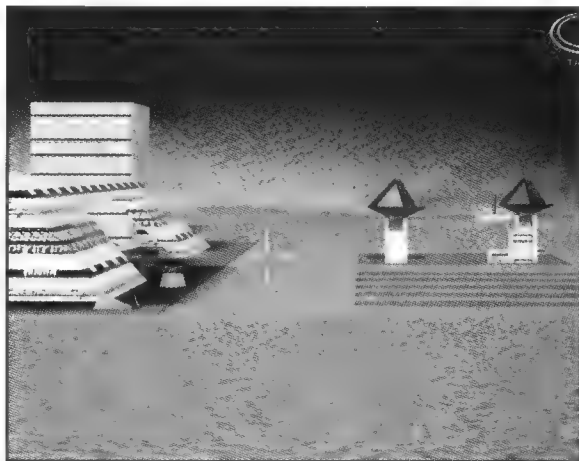


Fig. 14-15.

This western entrance of the port features two dangerous gun turrets. Again, snipe them from a distance. Then you can move closer to blast the uplink and command structures at right.

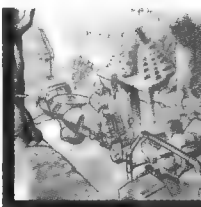
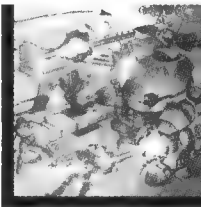
Now head due west. Another patrol, two Minotaurs, looks over the basin from the ridge to the west of the base. Kill them quickly with your superior numbers and then swing south. Two Talons are posted just 1000 yards southwest of the spaceport. They'll go down fast if you hit them with your full squad.

Once all defense forces are defeated, you can enter the spaceport safely and decimate any other structures in sight until you bag your quota of 12.

CAMPAIGN: SIEGE 3

Chapter 15

Finally, time to go home—Homeworld\Desire, that is. The human emperor's fleet continues its hurried trek back from Mars. With the moon's spaceports and anti-orbital guns subdued, a window to Earth is now open. Your coldly calculated Cybrid plan is to drop in where human\animal defenses are weakest. That would be Earth's northern polar reaches, lightly defended by scattered siege gun emplacements, some Herc units and, I don't know, maybe a few reindeer.



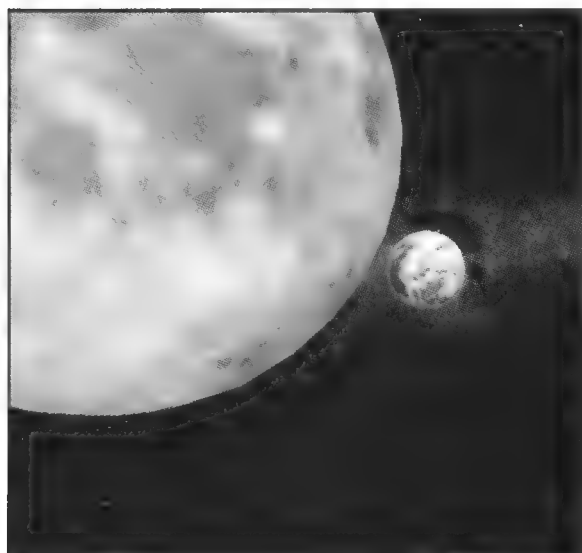
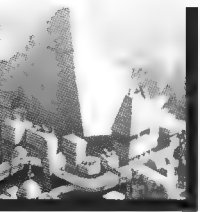
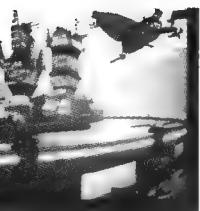


Fig. 15-1.
The moon is ours.
Next stop: Home-World\ Desire.

Overall, the missions get tougher in this campaign. After all, it's an assault on the enemy's sacred home planet. Fortunately, you have access to better technology and bigger gun platforms. In fact, you can (and should) open Siege 3 with the heavy cruiser of the Cybrid Herc fleet, the 60-ton Adjudicator.

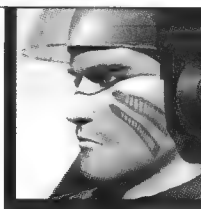
MISSION: ARRIVE//FREEZE//BURN

Your first task is to destroy a group of generators that power massive polar siege guns. The gun/generator pairs are located in three bases, each guarded by a pair of defense turrets.

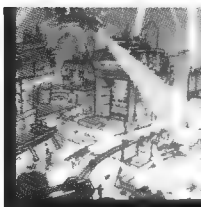
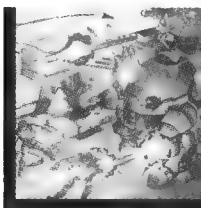
Like the first mission of the previous campaign (Disarm//Neutralize), you have a choice of three mission entry points. These correspond to the locations of the three bases. This mission also lets you ride an Adjudicator, a *real* machine. Believe me, you'll need it.

Enemies

- ★ 4 Talon
- ★ 1 Minotaur
- ★ 1 Basilisk
- ★ 1 Knight's Apocalypse
- ★ 2 Knight's Myrmidon



- ★ 1 Knight's Basilisk
- ★ 1 Gorgon
- ★ 6 Turret\\Construct
- ★ 4 Generator\\Construct (primary targets)
- ★ 4 Energy-Projection\\Construct
- ★ 2 Uplink\\Facility
- ★ Communication\\Facility
- ★ Solar\\Facility
- ★ 2 Storage Construct
- ★ 2 Planetary-Defense\\Construct
- ★ 1 Command\\Facility
- ★ 1 Creed\\Totem
- ★ Various cargo ships



Recommended Rig Setup

Yes, give me my Adjudicator, please. This heavy gun platform can handle almost anything you'll meet in the remaining Cybrid missions. For this mission (and several to follow), take two EMPs and two Particle Beam Weapons, which inflict 600 shield and 540 armor damage points. This is a heavy rack to carry, so take the lighter Mu assault engine and the QBM armor to balance the tonnage.

Pass your old Shepherd on to the squadmate in the Recluse tank if he's still with you. Give him the Blasters you just put back in the weapons cache. Also, consider hanging a pair of ELF's on a Goad and then giving it to your highest rated pilot. Now your squad can concentrate some overwhelming firepower on a target.

Last but not least, be sure everyone has ECM Jammers. A number of missile boats and missile turrets populate this mission.

Mission Overview

It doesn't matter which mission entry point you select. Drop point selection only affects the order in which you hit the three bases, which is not important here. One overall strategy





note: Never rush into enemy bases! It's much better to hit what you can from a distance, outside turret range. Another tip: Try to draw base defenders out over open ground for engagements, particularly when you have superior firepower.

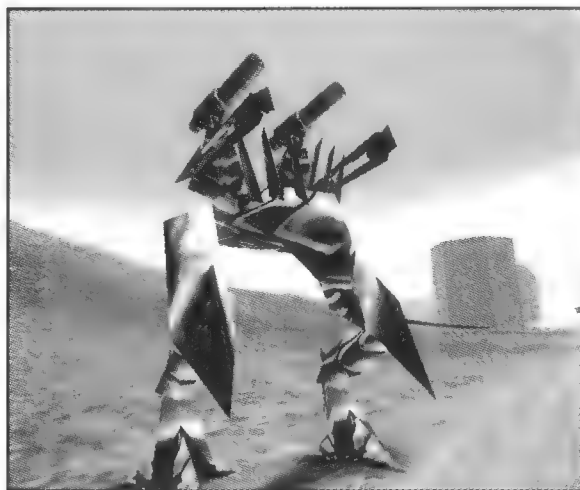


Fig. 15-2.
A towering Adjudicator with Particle Beam Weapons is a sight to behold.

Mission Walkthrough

In this walkthrough, Drop Point 1 will be the mission entry. You start about 1250 meters from the first base at Nav 001, which is guarded by a Minotaur and two Talons.

First, as always, engage your ECM Jammer. Use Zoom to target the nearest turret, approach to about 875 meters, and open fire. (Your Particle Beam Weapon has a range of 1000 yards.) The first hit draws the attention of the Minotaur and Talons, but you should be able to destroy the turret before they get in range.

Target the nearest of the three defenders and send your squad after him. Then follow the squad and drill the distracted target with big PBW hits. Fun, eh? After you mop up the defenders, destroy the remaining turret on the back, left side of the base.

Now it's safe to enter the base. The only target you *must* destroy is the generator. "No, there's no need to destroy all the buildings at each base," says Graeme Bayless. "Then again, that never stops me. It's very Cybrid." When the generator's obliterated, head directly to the next base at Nav 002.



Fig. 15-3.

Nail that first turret atop the hill from 900 meters, well outside its range. (The other turret is the structure at the far left, across the base.)



Fig. 15-4.

Here's the first of four generators you must atomize to offline the big anti-orbital guns.

NOTE

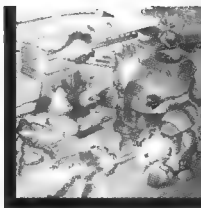
If you rush to attack the base instead of halting 1000 meters out, you also trigger the base defenders, a Basilisk and a Talon. This forces your squad to fight four enemies at once. Four on four is a fair fight. Note: Avoid fair fights whenever possible. The key to success in the later campaigns is to divide and conquer.

Talon. Again, you should focus your own fire at the turrets. Once the defenders are dead, enter the base and, once again, demolish the generator. Proceed to Nav 003.

As you approach the base at Nav 003, halt about 1000 meters out. Your approach triggers another heavy strike force, again composed of a Knight's Apocalypse and Knight's

About 1200 meters from Nav 002, you get a Nexus warning of a heavy, incoming strike force. Suddenly, a Knight's Apocalypse and a Knight's Myrmidon descend on you from the south ridge (to your right). Send your squad at the infidels. The Apocalypse fires missiles, so be sure your jammer is active.

When the animal strike force is meat, approach the base at Nav 002. Send your squad after the patrolling pair of defenders—a Gorgon armed with two Blast Cannons, and a





Myrmidon. It attacks from the northeast, behind you. Use the same approach as before: first, send your squadmates to distract the closest target; then follow them in with Particle Beam blasts.

When the Knight's vehicles are smoking, molten scrap, turn your attention to the base defenders and turrets. A missile-firing Basilisk and a Talon rush out. Greet them with death; then eliminate the two base turrets. Finally, destroy the remaining two generators. Mission complete.



MISSION: GATHER//RETRIEVE

PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: POLAR ASSAULT ZONE

It's so darned satisfying to be a Cybrid. For example, in this mission, you get to "harvest" innocent civilians for use as "raw material" for "surgical conversion"—that is, brain transplants. The Machinator Sect will rip out their brains and replace them with hardwired Cybrid intelligences to create "infiltration\sabotage <units>." Cool!

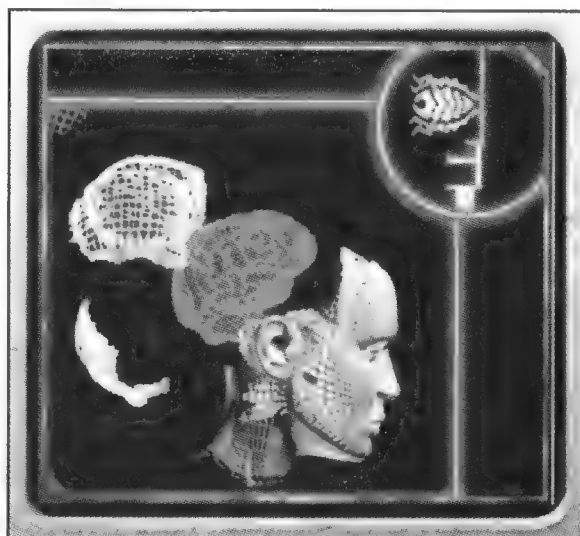
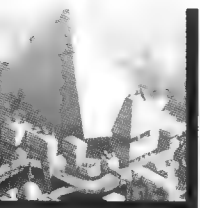


Fig. 15-5.

Say, can I pick your brain for a minute?

Enemies

- ★ 2 Basilisk
- ★ 2 Gorgon
- ★ 2 Minotaur

- ★ 2 Command\Facility
- ★ 1 Knight's Apocalypse
- ★ 3 Knight's Myrmidon
- ★ Various civilian structures (do not destroy!)
- ★ Various military targets

Recommended Rig Setup

Keep the same setup as last mission. Again, be sure everyone has good ECM Jammers.

Mission Overview

Here's a mission where it pays to be methodical in the traditional Cybrid fashion. Two polar bases feature military and civilian facilities. Your job is to collect at least 28 human subjects for brain implants. If you destroy just four civilian buildings, you lose the mission. So carefully scan each building to determine if it's a civilian or military target.

Mission Walkthrough

Engage your ECM Jammer and proceed to Nav 001. A tough triad of defenders—Basilisk, Gorgon, and Minotaur—beg to differ with your intentions. Enforce your point of view. This can be a tricky fight. If you concentrate squad fire on one target at a time, you will fare better and take less overall damage.



Fig. 15-6.

Scan each building to find subjects for your Machinator Sect. Humans tend to be in “house-like” places such as these.

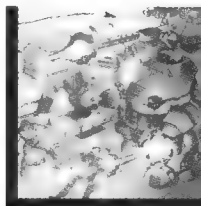




Fig. 15-7.

Military structures tend to be red-striped, but scan to be sure. Destroy that Command\Facility atop the hill to complete one mission objective.

Scan *all* buildings and check your message line to see the results. (If your message line is disabled, press **F5** to activate it.) Shoot when the message reads: "Military target. Destruction approved." (Or don't shoot. Actually, the only building you *must* destroy at each base is the Command\Facility.) Do not attack a building if its scan reveals human occupants. Again, if you destroy four civilian buildings, you fail the mission.

Five structures in this first base (including the Communication\Facility) hold human\animals. When you've scanned all buildings, proceed on to Nav 002. Your approach triggers an attack by a Knight's Apocalypse (loaded with racks of radar-guided missiles) and a tough, heavy Knight's Myrmidon. Let them come to you. Engage them about 1500 meters from the base to avoid the attention of the base defenders. You don't want five enemy vehicles breathing down your neck all at once.

When the Knights are fried, swing in a wide arc to the right. Approach the military half of the base from the south. (Again, you can tell military structures by their red stripes.) The idea is to keep your distance from the civilian half of the base where the trio of base defenders patrols nervously. Quickly scan the military structures—no brains anywhere. Then target and destroy the Command\Facility.

This brings the base defenders—a Basilisk, a Minotaur, and a Gorgon. They're all heavily armed and have good pilots. Again, concentrate fire to bring each down quickly.

Now, hastily scan the civilian buildings until you get your quota of 28 humans. If you do so quickly enough, you complete the mission without facing the brutal pair of Knight's Myrmidons that rush to reinforce the base. However, you might enjoy the combat, after which you can go on a little Easter Egg hunt. Can you find the snowman? Can you blow him up?

I think you can.

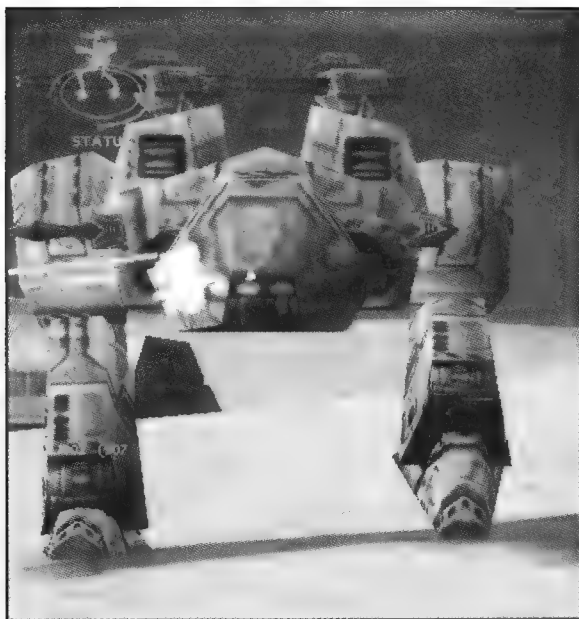


Fig. 15-8.
This Gorgon with Blast Cannons is one of three heavily armed base defenders.



Fig. 15-9.
Human\\animals are strange.

MISSION: ESCORT//INSERT

Your job here is to escort a Mobile Nexus (loaded with happy, new-brained spies) to a safe extraction point. It's a tough task, but a third Shepherd squadmate makes things a bit easier.

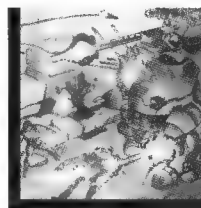




Fig. 15-10.

Not a bad-looking squad—an Adjudicator and three Shepherds.

Enemies

- ★ 1 Paladin
- ★ 2 Myrmidon
- ★ 2 Minotaur
- ★ 2 Knight's Basilisk
- ★ 1 Knight's Gorgon

Recommended Rig Setup

You get a third Shepherd for this mission. So if you've kept your squadmates intact, you can have a powerful, three-Shepherd entourage now. After you assign the vehicle, trade the Twin Lasers for Heavy Lasers on the large weapon mounts. Dump unnecessary components such as Shield Modulators or Turbine Boosters. Then add a Thermal Diffusion Jammer for this mission.

Of course, keep the awesome Adjudicator for yourself, but switch everybody else to Thermal Diffusion Jammers. Also, it helps to have good sensors in your vehicle for this mission.

Mission Overview

Escort//Insert can be difficult without intelligent deployment of your forces. Your task is to escort a Mobile Nexus safely through waves of attackers to an extraction point. Support vehicles accompany the Mobile Nexus, but only the Nexus itself is sacred. All other convoy vehicles are totally expendable.

The key to success in this mission: Don't overreact to any one wave of attackers. Send your squadmates after human\animal assault teams while you stick with the Mobile Nexus. Trust your team; by now, they're very good. Also note that halfway through this mission, your Nexus directs the convoy to an emergency nav point. Be prepared!

Mission Walkthrough

Head through the big ice canyon toward Nav 001. Stay to the right of the convoy because the first wave hits from that side. When you see the red blips on your radar scope—two Myrmidons and a Paladin—hit **T** to target the nearest enemy tank. Then send your squad after it. Stay with the convoy! If enemies slip past your squad and attack the Mobile Nexus, shatter the threat yourself.

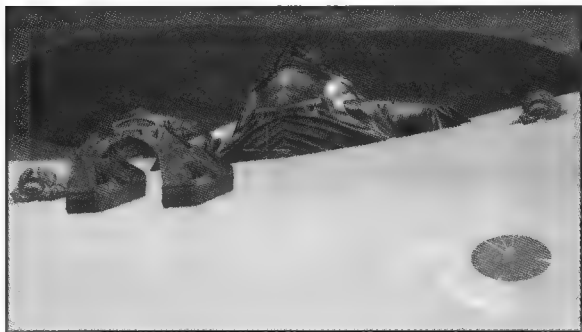


Fig. 15-11.

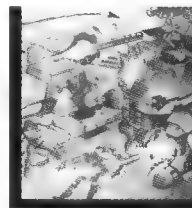
The other convoy vehicles look cool, but they're expendable. Only the Mobile Nexus is important to mission success.

TIP

Here's a cheesy trick, courtesy of Graeme Bayless. In this mission, the Mobile Nexus rolls on ahead, oblivious to danger. Plant yourself in front of it and stop. The huge Mobile Nexus pushes you forward, but you slow him considerably. This effectively delays his progress into the next wave of trouble.

When the first wave is broken, hustle your squad to the left side of the convoy where the next attack will come. When the Mobile Nexus reaches Nav 001, the convoy is directed to Nav 002. Stay to the left of the convoy as it turns. Note that two mountain passes branch off ahead in the distance, one to either side.

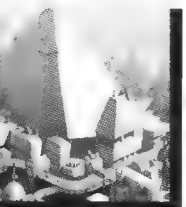
Soon, a pair of Minotaurs attacks up the southeast (left) pass. The Nexus alerts you to "human\animals on intercept course." It then aborts the current travel vector and orders you on to Nav 003 for emergency extraction. Again, send your squad after the Minotaurs while you hustle in front of the Mobile Nexus.





NOTE

Human attackers will target the convoy first. Draw their attention quickly to save your Mobile Nexus.



As your squad tangles with Minotaurs, a third attack wave of two Knight's Basilisks hits up the northwest pass, directly ahead of the convoy. Draw their attention until your squad returns. Then direct your concentrated fire on the Basilisks.

When the Knight's Basilisks are eliminated, hustle in front of your convoy again. As you approach Nav 003, a big Knight's Gorgon with two ELFs and two Heavy Lasers blocks the final passage. If you and your squad have kept pace with the Mobile Nexus, your massed guns can easily snuff out this threat.

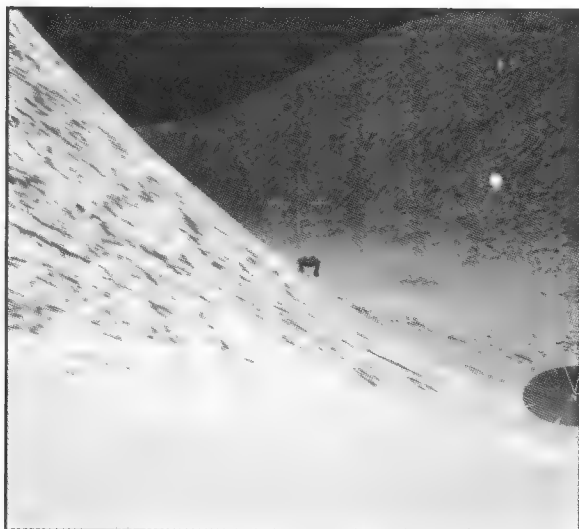


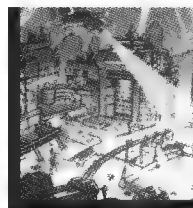
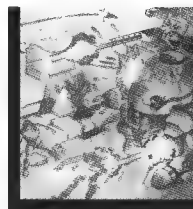
Fig. 15-12.

Don't get complacent as you enter the final mountain pass to Nav 003. See that big Gorgon up ahead?

CAMPAIGN: SIEGE 4

Chapter 16

Had enough of desolated landscapes? Welcome to the lush green of Assault Zone China. As one of the privileged "children" of Prometheus, you stand in the front rank of his planetary assault force. Of course, the human\animal forces defend their homeland with feral tenacity. But <Giver-of-Will> does not send you into battle ill-equipped. The first mission of this campaign offers you access, at last, to the mighty Cybrid Executioner.



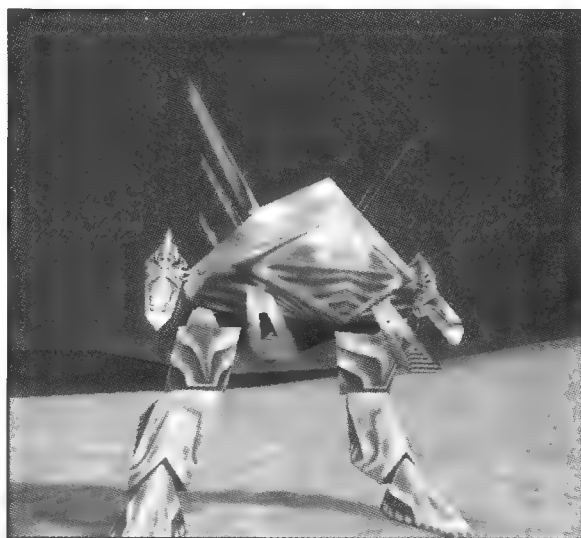


Fig. 16-1.

China's pretty big, but so is your gleaming new Executioner.

MISSION: DESECRATE//DESTROY//DEMORALIZE

PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: ASSAULT ZONE "CHINA"

Ah, >>TERROR<<. Mulching animal warforms is swell, and it's always fun to do a few brain transplants. But nothing beats slinging plasma at large civilian populations, wreaking havoc, and blowing up all their pathetic creed\ldols.

This Cybrid mission directs you to ravage a large settlement surrounding the Xi'an religious complex in China. As in some previous missions, you have the choice of three entry points. You also have the chance to drive The Cybrid Big Boy, the battleship of the fleet, the Executioner.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Basilisk
- ★ 2 Knight's Basilisk
- ★ 1 Gorgon
- ★ 3 Minotaur
- ★ 4 Talon
- ★ 1 Knight's Gorgon
- ★ 1 Knight's Myrmidon
- ★ 1 Knight's Apocalypse
- ★ 3 Terran Personnel Cargo
- ★ 2 Escape Ship
- ★ 22 Worship\Temple-Construct
- ★ 1 Primary Creed\ldol (Buddha statue)
- ★ Dozens of other constructs, hub\ldests, facilities, etc.

Recommended Rig Setup

Yes, take the first Executioner for yourself.

Now, you *could* outfit the big beast in the Big Whacker Configuration, featuring four Particle Beam Weapons (PBWs). However, this weapon set is so heavy—the four guns alone weigh 30 tons—you'd have to sacrifice a lot of other features.



Fig. 16-2.

Hang a pair of PBWs on this big guy, add two Heavy Blasters, and watch the animal fur fly.

For now, go with just two PBWs and a pair of Heavy Blasters. This lowers the weapons weight to 25 tons. Later, when you can get an AGRV (Anti-Gravity Module), you gain five extra tons back and can install quad-PBW.

Give your old Adjudicator to another squadmate. Hang two PBWs on its extra-large mounts and two Blasters on its medium mounts. Remember, squadmates should always take the lowest rated computer and sensor to save tonnage.

Mission Overview

Your Cybrid forces assault a heavily populated Chinese settlement. Your squad is the main strike force, but four units of Cybrid artillery also bombard the area at your command. You attack through a misty rain that obscures your vision.

Your two primary objectives: First, destroy the Buddha statue (called "Primary Creed\ldol") in the open temple at the center of the city complex. Second, wipe out all 15 human war vehicles in the zone of operations.

Your two secondary objectives: First, destroy at least half of the 22 High Temples (called "Worship\Temple-Constructs") in the suburban clusters scattered around the central city





area. Second, knock out all five escaping transports—two flying Escape Ships and three Terran Personnel Cargo ground vehicles.

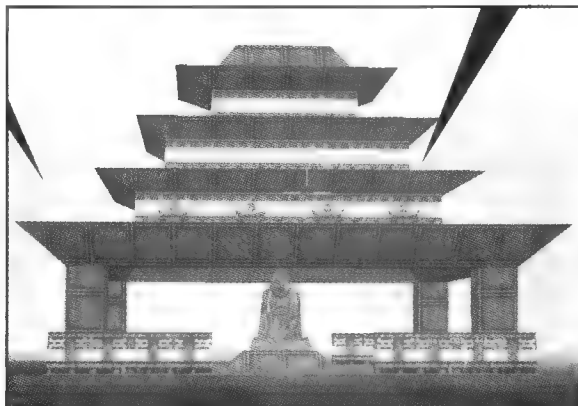


Fig. 16-3.
This Buddha “creed\\idol” is your primary target, but save it for last. Focus first on killing everything that moves.



The combat is intense but straightforward. Just slug it out with the defense forces; you have truly awesome firepower at your fingertips now. Destroying the Buddha statue is cake once all defenders are eliminated. And your artillery units will take care of the subsidiary High Temples without help from you.

The toughest part of this mission is completing the secondary objective of snuffing out the escaping transports. The flying Escape Ships, in particular, are very difficult to see through the misty rain. Therefore, frequently monitor your Satellite Map as you seek transports while in vicious combat with defense forces.

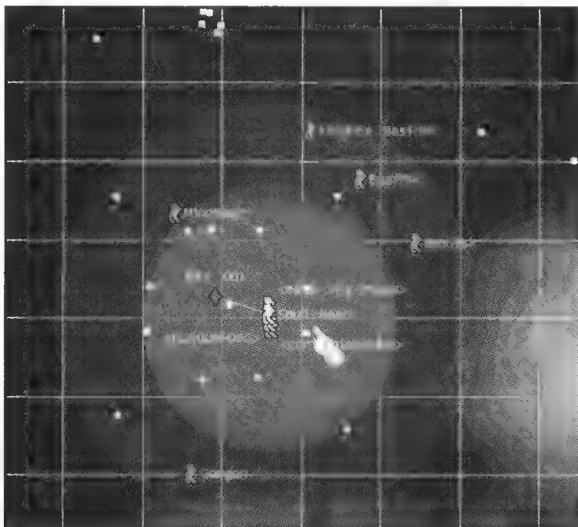


Fig. 16-4.
Heavy rain obscures your view, so use the Satellite Map to find attackers and escaping civilian transports.

TIP

Lots of stuff is crawling or flying around in this mission. The key to success is your mastery of the Satellite Map. Enemy war vehicles and, in particular, the civilian escape transports are difficult to eyeball in the wet, murky weather.

Hit **(ENTER)** to open the map and watch for activity. If an enemy target appears in the reddish sphere of your sensor sweep, quickly hit **(ESC)** to close the map. Then target the enemy and send squadmates after it. Unless you face imminent danger, switch back to the Satellite Map. In particular, watch for Terra Personnel Cargo carriers and flying Escape Ships, which are almost impossible to see through the rain.

The Minotaur won't last long. Your combined squad fire is now a sizzling maelstrom of death. Seconds later, your artillery units report in and request permission to begin their barrage. Press **(1)** to begin the artillery attack. (If you miss the command window, just hit **(SHIFT) + (F1)** to get it back.)

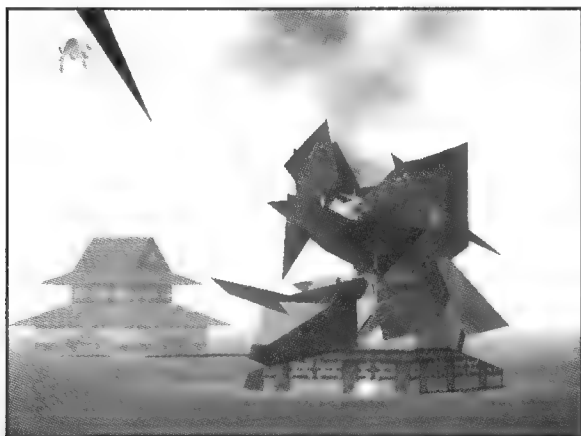


Fig. 16-5.

Let your artillery eliminate these “High Temples” while you focus on attackers and escaping transports.

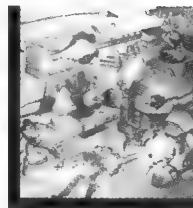
Continue toward Nav 001, but monitor the Satellite Map for enemy defenders and escaping transports. Up ahead, the towering high-rise structures of the city loom in the mist. As you approach, defenders suddenly begin to swarm intensely. Keep your squad

Mission Walkthroughs

Regardless of your mission entry point, swarms of human\animal warforms attack from all directions when you approach the central city area at Nav 001.

DROP POINT 001

This selection drops you in the hills about 3000 meters due east of Nav 001. It also puts a Minotaur right in your face. In fact, it starts hitting your squad before the screen fades in from black. Fortunately, you are now so big and bad you can take a few cheap shots and grin.





active! Exit the Satellite Map to assign targets and to fight. Pop the map open every few seconds to scan for more attackers and fleeing transports.

Don't worry about finding the human war vehicles. They'll come to *you*—all of them, eventually. But the civilian transports are running scared. You must hunt them down before they slip away. Again, look for a total of three Terran Personnel Cargo vehicles and two flying Escape Ships. If you see one, immediately go after it yourself unless a squad-mate is considerably closer.

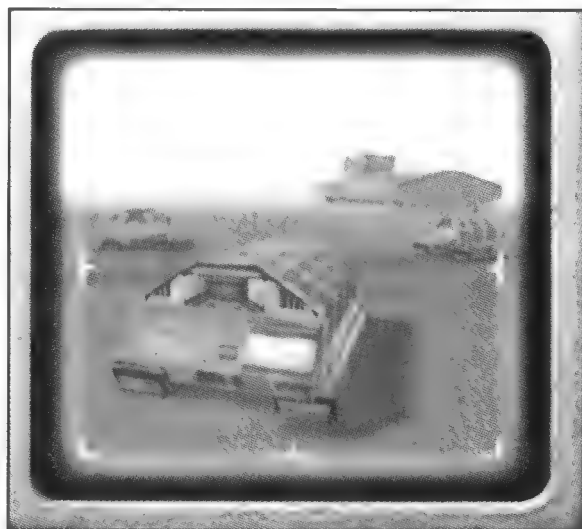
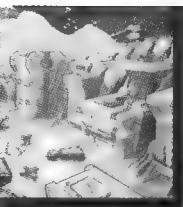


Fig. 16-6.
Watch for three Terran Personnel Cargo trucks and two flying Escape Ships.

TIP

All escaping civilian transports flow toward the northwest corner of the Satellite Map.

DROP POINT 002

This choice drops you farthest from the city, almost 4000 meters southwest of Nav 001. It offers the stiffest overall challenge because the five civilian transports flee to the northwest. One of them, a Terran Personnel Cargo, starts its escape from a far northern point. Therefore, it's very difficult to complete the secondary objective, "destroy//burn all escaping vehicles."

One way is to head straight north from the mission drop to the northwest corner of the map. Then cut off the transport escape corridor while skirmishing with the occasional strike force on the way. This method offers less intense combat. By the time you finally veer back toward the city center, you've thinned out the defense ranks a bit. But again, this choice makes it hard to destroy all five escaping vehicles.

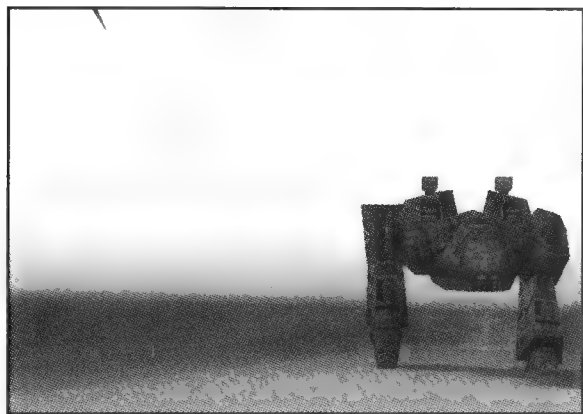


Fig. 16-7.

Your approach to the Xi'an urban center draws a lot of attention.

DROP POINT 003

The third drop point puts you north and slightly west of the city center, about 3300 meters from Nav 001. This choice offers the easiest way to destroy escaping vehicles because your approach vector to Nav 001 coincides with their flight path. Nice, eh?

Again, the tactical approach is fundamentally the same as with the other drop points. Work your way toward the city center, fighting waves of attackers and scanning your Satellite Map for escaping transports. Just let the artillery handle the High Temples. Save the Buddha "creed\idol" in the central, open temple as your last target.

MISSION: ESCORT//ESTABLISH

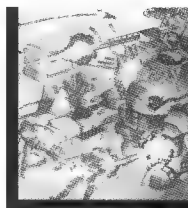
PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: ASSAULT ZONE "CHINA"

This is a fun little mission—short but sweet. Your task is to bludgeon your way into a hostile hilltop base ahead of Nexus-3220. The rub: Gun turrets blast you and Nexus-3220 from the hilltop, but you shouldn't destroy them. You want them intact for future use. How's that for a neat twist?

Enemies

- ★ 2 Banshee bombers
- ★ 4 Minotaur
- ★ 1 Gorgon
- ★ 1 Talon
- ★ 1 Disrupter
- ★ 1 Apocalypse
- ★ 1 Myrmidon
- ★ 2 Knight's Talon
- ★ 1 Knight's Gorgon





Recommended Rig Setup

Keep the same vehicles and configurations. But check each vehicle and make sure no weapons or components were lost in the last mission.



Mission Walkthrough

Engage your Thermal Jammer and head for Nav 001. Two Banshees fly overhead and spot you for an upcoming ambush. Ha! Go ahead and try, human chum. Soon two Minotaurs rumble in from the right (east). Note that if Nexus-3220 takes fire, it speeds up a bit. So eliminate the Minotaurs quickly, or send your squadmates after them and keep pace with the Nexus up the slope.

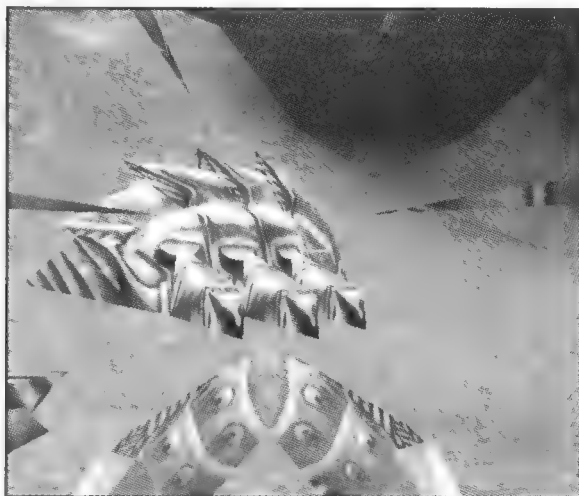


Fig. 16-8.

The Nexus is slow, but an ammo round in the butt will spur it to a higher gear.

TIP

Here's a sneaky tip. Your Nexus is slow, but it speeds up when it takes its first hit. If your squad handles the first two Minotaurs and gets back to the Nexus quickly, shoot the Nexus yourself (once, with your weakest, untested gun).

A big Gorgon with Blast Cannons and another Minotaur guard the base on the hilltop. When you (or the Nexus) get within 600 meters, they attack. Be sharp. This is an easy place to lose the Nexus. One tactic: Target the Minotaur and send your speedier Shepherd squadmates at it. Then battle the Gorgon yourself with the help of your big Adjudicator pal.

Here's the hard part. During this skirmish with the base defenders, you must grin and bear it as

the two hilltop turrets drill you with laser fire. This is because the gun turrets are automated. Once the mobile defenders are eliminated, the Nexus plugs into the base systems

control unit to “reprogram//convert//assimilate” all base structures and functions. This includes the turrets. When the inevitable human counterattack begins, the turrets will target animals instead of Cybrids.

The irony is rich. Unfortunately, you’re a Cybrid, so you can’t savor it.

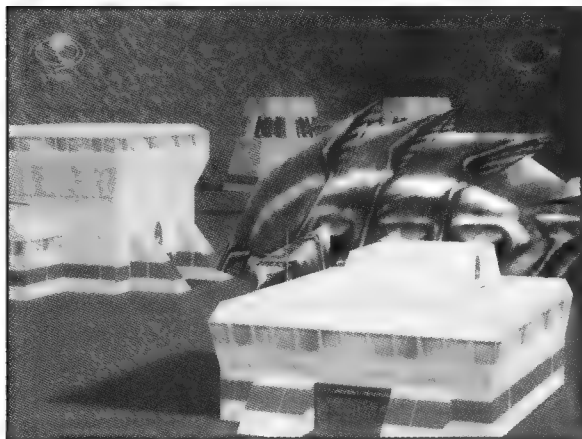


Fig. 16-9.

Twenty seconds after the Nexus plugs into the systems control pod, the base turrets switch their allegiance to your side.

TIP

Here’s a tactic: When the last base defender (Minotaur or Gorgon) goes down, make a zigzag retreat down the hill with your squad in tow. Dodge turret fire for the 20 seconds it takes the Nexus to plug in and take control of the base systems.

your squad’s guns. By this time you may have damaged units however. After this second wave, hit **[F]** to check the status of your nearest squadmate. Then rapidly cycle through the others by hitting **[G]** several times.

The third and final wave can come from either the southeast or southwest, and it’s a killer. Three Knight’s Talons and a Knight’s Gorgon, all with elite pilots, roar in with an animal vengeance. Send your quicker squadmates after Talons and tangle with the Gorgon yourself. Beware the Gorgon’s powerful Blast Cannons.





MISSION: HUNT//FIND//KILL

PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: ASSAULT ZONE "CHINA"

OK, it's time to face the varsity squad. Yes, Caanon Weathers, the infamous "Icehawk," prowls the vicinity with a few of his finest Knights. Caanon is easily the toughest foe you'll face until the final mission. And he knows how to spring an ambush.

This mission also features the timed arrival of additional waves of Knights. If you tarry in eliminating Caanon and his mates, you can end up in a lethal swarm of elite animal units.

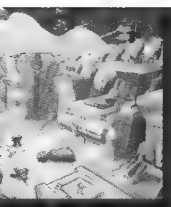


Fig. 16-10. Caanon Weathers and his elite Knights roam the area. Eliminate this biohazard.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Knight's Minotaur
- ★ 1 Knight's Basilisk
- ★ 1 Caanon's Basilisk
- ★ 3 Knight's Talon (timed arrival)
- ★ 3 Knight's Paladin (timed arrival)
- ★ 3 Knight's Apocalypse (timed arrival)



Recommended Rig Setup

Again, keep the same vehicles as in the previous mission. Be sure everyone has a Thermal Diffusion Jammer. If you face the Knight's Apocalypse trio at mission's end, the heat-seekers will buzz around you like flies.

Mission Overview

Kill Caanon; then call in the dropship. What more do you need to know? One thing: As mentioned earlier, this mission has a timer. Just thirty seconds after Caanon's squad ambushes you, several staggered waves of Imperial Knight reinforcements begin a long approach. If you handle Caanon quickly, you can avoid them. But once a wave arrives on the scene, you cannot call in your dropship until the Knights are eliminated.

Mission Walkthrough

This mission doesn't last long; the action is hot and fast, so get psyched. Turn on your Thermal Diffuser and proceed to Nav 001. Advanced warning: When you arrive there, Caanon and his Knights ambush your team from one of three places. One good tactic is to stop about 1100 meters from Nav 001. Hit **[F4]** and then **[4]** to send two squadmates up the hill to the nav point. Let them get about 500 meters ahead of you. Then follow, watching carefully for the ambush. When Caanon's attack comes, keep distant and pick targets with your rack of long-range weapons. Caution: This is a good way to lose squadmates.

Caanon rides his feared Basilisk, and his Knight mates pilot two Minotaurs and another Basilisk. All four are highly skilled pilots, the super elite of the Knight corps. They can hit from one of three ambush points. First option: All four Knights swoop down from atop the hill to the east. Second option: Three Knights form an assault line from the east while Caanon slips in behind you from the west. Third option: The squad hits from all four directions at once in a surrounding swarm.

As always, the best combat strategy is to concentrate your squad fire on targets one at a time. (Heard this before?) The combined damage points your massed weapons can inflict now is absolutely staggering. Even the hardest enemy Hero will detonate quickly if you keep a steady stream of fire on the target.

If you kill Caanon's squad quickly, you have an interesting choice. You can press **[1]** to call in your dropship and head home a hero. But if you press **[F12]** at this point, you see that your secondary objective to "destroy//purge all animal resistance" is incomplete. Several more Knight units lurk in the vicinity. In fact, three Knight's Talons rush up the dry





riverbed from the southeast right now. Once they get within sensor range, your dropship will not land until you eliminate them.



NOTE

Actually, these Knight's Talons started approaching 30 seconds after you triggered Caanon's ambush. But they travel far, so their arrival is usually well after you dispose of Caanon and his crew.

Being the brutally efficient Cybrid you are, you of course choose to wait for the Talons. After all, Talons—even *Knight's* Talons—are rarely a threat to an Executioner or Adjudicator. But check the status of your Shepherd squadmates. If either has red damage, open your Satellite Map and send them to a nav point farther north, out of harm's way. Then take on the Talons with your healthy troops.

After the Talons die, you could call the dropship.

However, a quick [F12] check shows you *still* haven't purged all animal resistance. That's right, now three Knight's Paladins descend on your position from the hillside to the east. Do you stay or go? Check your squad status. If you still have a healthy bunch, hang around for more fun.

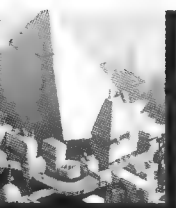


Fig. 18-11.

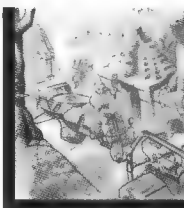
This final Knight's Apocalypse trio will light up your life in a really bad way if you don't have jammers.

After you kill the Paladins, guess what? Again, you could summon the dropship. But again, if you hesitate too long, you trigger the appearance of three imposing Knight's Apocalypses from the south. Good luck. These fellows are tough, and by now you're probably hurting a bit. But if you manage to put down this last insurrection, you can call in the dropship, finally.

CAMPAIGN: SIEGE 5

Chapter 17

The Core Directive flourishes. Your relentless advance on Nova-Alexandria, the imperial fortress-capital, proceeds efficiently within optimal parameters. In other words, your guys are kicking butt. But obstacles lie ahead—Harabec Weathers for one. More immediately, it seems that certain Cybrid units known as Metagens are rejecting the tenets of the Core Directive.



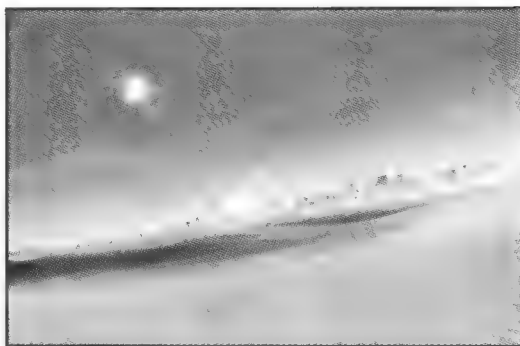
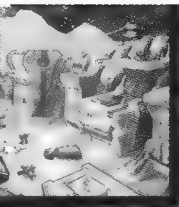


Fig. 17-1. The gates of Nova-Alexandria are within reach at last. But beware. Harabec Weathers stands guard over the animal emperor's lair.

Therefore, your first task in this campaign is to terminate this Metagen “heresy\corruption” before it spreads through your Cybrid troops. Then you’re off to Nova-Alexandria for a final confrontation with the animals’ last great predator, Harabec Weathers.

MISSION: HERESY\CORRUPTION

PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: CORE ASSAULT ZONE (DESERT)

Before you even think about strategy for this one, listen to what mission programmer Jesse Russell has to say.

“It’s hard. It’s wild. It’s different every time I play it,” he says. “I mean, I scripted it, and yet I never know exactly what’s going to happen.”

“Heresy\Corruption” features three different factions—the Cybrids (you), the humans, and the mysterious Metagens. These heretic Cybrids see human resilience as an asset worthy of study and emulation. And that’s not all. There’s even a chance that your own squadmates will be infected by the Metagen philosophy (called “deviant bughought” by Prometheus). If so, they may actually turn on you!

The action is spread across a vast stretch of desert that includes a landing site, a refueling depot, and a well-defended urban center. Your primary mission objectives: First, destroy the heretic Metagen unit that seeks to commandeer a Knight’s Dropship at the landing site and escape. Second, obliterate a convoy coming down the road from the landing site to re-supply the urban center.



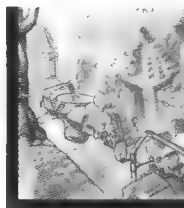
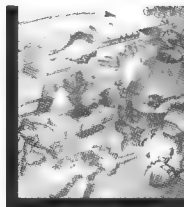
Fig. 17-2.

Heretics must die. Your job: Wipe out the Metagens before they can escape.

If the Metagens escape in the dropship, you fail. If the convoy reaches the city, you receive a new primary mission objective: Destroy the powerful (and re-supplied) city defense structures.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Metagen Shepherd
- ★ 2 Metagen Seeker
- ★ 2 Metagen Goad
- ★ 1 Metagen Adjudicator
- ★ 1 Knight's Dropship
- ★ 3 Nike
- ★ 3 Knight's Gorgon
- ★ 1 Knight's Disrupter
- ★ 2 Knight's Myrmidon
- ★ 2 Knight's Paladin
- ★ 1 Knight's Minotaur
- ★ 1 Knight's Apocalypse
- ★ 1 Terran Personnel Cargo
- ★ 1 Terran Big Ammo Cargo
- ★ 1 Terran Fuel Cargo
- ★ 1 Terran Utility Truck
- ★ 3 Planetary-Defense\Construct
- ★ 8 Turret\Construct



Recommended Rig Setup

Some Dynamix folks suggest it's better to be fast than heavy for this free-for-all. However, we played Heresy//Corruption several times in an Executioner and had an excellent rate of success. The tradeoff between speed and firepower is up to you.



Fig. 17-3. Speed is good, but firepower rules. Add the Alien AGRAV Module to reduce tonnage; then hang a couple more PBWs on your hulking beast.

Consider this: Installing the newly available Alien Anti-Gravity Module on your Executioner actually reduces your vehicle weight *by five tons*. This means you can trade in your Heavy Blasters for a second pair of Particle Beam Weapons. Four PBWs give you excellent accuracy (unlike the more powerful MFAC). Combine that with 2400 points of shield damage or 2160 points of armor damage with every quad-linked direct hit. Holy cow! That's instant-kill firepower.

Another important suggestion: Be sure you have a Thermal Diffusion Jammer. One of the Metagen Shepherds carries four Shrike missile 8-packs plus a Universal Ammo Pack. This gives him 64 heat-seeking missiles to sling around the zone of operations.

One final note: Several of your potential squadmates can be infected by Metagen "bugthought" and suddenly attack you during the mission. squadmates to avoid recruiting

are <tyranny> (80 percent chance to turn Metagen), <ocular-puncture> (85 percent chance), <process-canker> (70 percent), <bovine-burning> (65 percent), <candlewax-G> (60 percent), <scour> (50 percent), <stasis 90210: NULL> (45 percent), <Killer-of-Animals: Ninth> (45 percent), <Reducer-of-Animal-Habitat: Seventh> (40 percent), <injection-slaughter> (40 percent), and <carve-organics> (35 percent).

Mission Overview

Heresy\Corruption is so full of wacky stuff that it requires an expanded mission overview. First we'll discuss the mission objectives. Then we'll talk about the various wandering units that can muck up your plans.

PRIMARY MISSION OBJECTIVES

Two floating nav points on your Satellite Map mark your two primary objectives. A nav marker labeled "Metagens" follows a Metagen squad (Shepherd, Adjudicator, two Goads) moving toward the landing site to commandeer a Knight's Dropship for escape. Your ultimate goal is to destroy them, but you can prevent their escape by destroying the Knight's Dropship first.

If the Metagens reach the ship before you destroy either it or them, they board, and a 40-second countdown to liftoff begins. Your new primary objective is to destroy the Knight's Dropship before its "liftoff/retreat." If you do not destroy the ship before it flies safely away, you fail the mission.

Meanwhile, a nav marker labeled "Convoy" follows a supply convoy moving toward the city. Your objective is to destroy all three of its big cargo trucks. If you allow the convoy to reach the city, it re-supplies the various city defense units. One truck supplies ammo to Hercs, one adds shells for the big artillery guns, and one "awakens" the defense turrets.

If this re-supply happens, you are assigned a new primary objective: Raze the city. (Or, as your Nexus puts it, "Destroy//sterilize defensive\structures at Nav 002.") Naturally, this is a much stiffer challenge than simply blowing up defenseless cargo trucks.

THE WANDERERS

As mentioned, this mission features all sorts of wandering Metagen, Knight, and Cybrid units. These units can drop into the zone of operations in a number of places and choose random patrol routes. Best of all, if any of these wanderers meet, they fight.

"In fact, it's *theoretically* possible that you could finish this mission without firing a shot," says Jesse Russell. "One viable tactic is to use a light, fast Herc to instigate trouble. Just lead enemy groups into each other, and let them kill each other off."



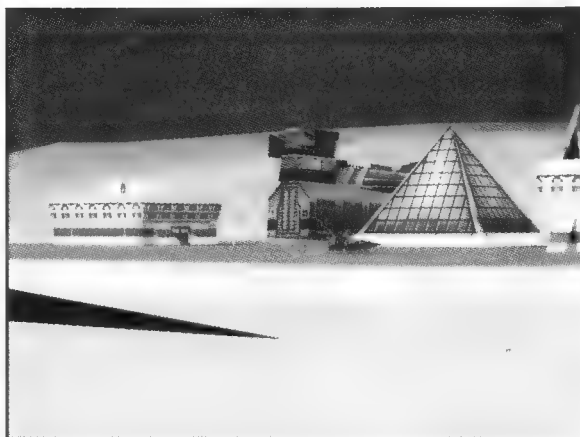


Fig. 17-4.

Metagens plan to steal the big dropship from this landing site to the southwest. Blast the ship before they get there!

Here's a list of the wanderers:



Two Metagen Seekers drop in, pick a random speed and patrol route, and then meander about looking for trouble. A couple of their patrol routes lead into the city, so they tend to wander into urban chaos.

Two Knight's Gorgons with ELF's and Plasma Guns patrol randomly until the convoy is attacked. Then they seek to target the convoy's attackers. With their size and weaponry, these Gorgons are not something to take lightly. Watch for them on your Satellite Map.

Two Knight's Paladins with Autocannons randomly wander various patrol routes until they find something to fight.



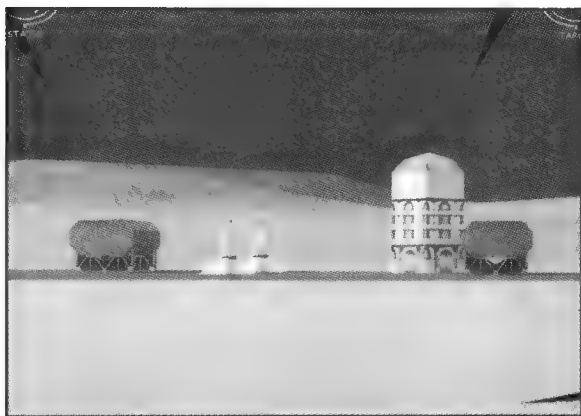
One Knight's Disrupter guards the main road that connects all three locations. Careful! This tank is cued to the city artillery. If its Disrupter weapon hits you, your vehicle slows to a crawl, and the artillery rains its deadly fire on your position.

Finally, two Cybrid Bolos (on your team) with Blink Guns wander randomly through the landscape. They seek heretics and humans to blink out of existence.

Mission Walkthrough

Here's the best overall strategy for this wild and wooly mission. It won't work *every* time, but it has a better chance of success than any other approach.

Head directly toward the small refueling depot due west of your start point. This gas station is where you'll intercept the convoy, which travels north along the road from the landing site to the urban center. As you proceed, a fairly weak Metagen Shepherd attacks from your south (left) flank. Immediately send your squad after it (they kill it quickly) while you lumber on.

**Fig. 17-5.**

Intercept the convoy near this refueling depot. Then hurry south to catch the escaping Metagens.

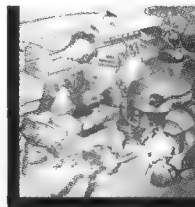
Soon, two Knight's Gorgons may or may not wander in from your north (right) flank. Again, send your squad after them and continue your single-minded advance on the refueling depot. At your Executioner's top speed of 81 kph, you should get within range of the depot just before the convoy reaches it. Meanwhile, keep monitoring your squad's battle with the Gorgons. The moment your boys win, order them to join on you. You'll need their help.

By now you should be within 1000 meters of the refueling depot; the convoy should be just reaching the station. But before you cherry-pick convoy vehicles, focus your attention on the station guards. They're two tough, nasty Knight's Myrmidons, one with twin Blast Cannons and one with twin Plasma Cannons. Ideally, your squad has returned to you. If not, these tanks can kill your Executioner easily. Hit them fast and hard; then gun down the convoy.

The convoy's three cargo carriers are your primary targets. You must destroy all three to complete the mission objective. (More later on what happens if you fail to destroy the convoy.)

Now quickly swing south and sprint full speed to the landing site. On the way, target the Knight's Dropship on the distant launch platform. Then send your squad after it, full force. If you destroy the ship before the Metagen unit reaches it, the Metagens can't escape. Then they take their anger out on you. (This is good. You have to destroy them eventually anyway.)

Note: With this particular strategy, there's a good chance the Metagens will beat you to the Knight's Dropship. Fortunately, once they board, a 40-second countdown begins. This should give you or your squad enough time to get close enough to blast the dropship before it takes off. Plus, you have another 10 seconds or so to shoot it out of the sky before it flies out of range.



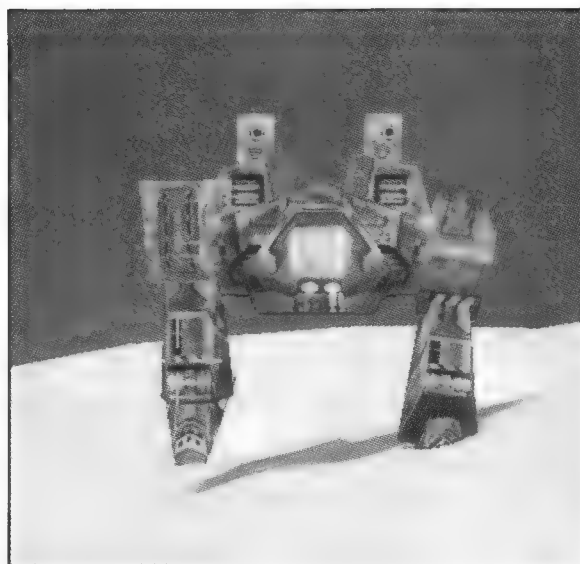


Fig. 17-6.

A pair of wandering Knight's Gorgons may pose an early problem. Send your team at them while you track the convoy.

If you fail to destroy the convoy, your new mission objective is to destroy the city defenses. These include eight turrets, three big siege guns, some support vehicles, and three powerful Knight war vehicles—a Gorgon, a Minotaur, and an Apocalypse. Believe me, it's not easy. The Knights only had energy weapons until the convoy reached the city. Now they have big ammo weapons too. Powerful MFAC turrets are online, and one convoy truck delivered ammo to activate several missile turrets as well.

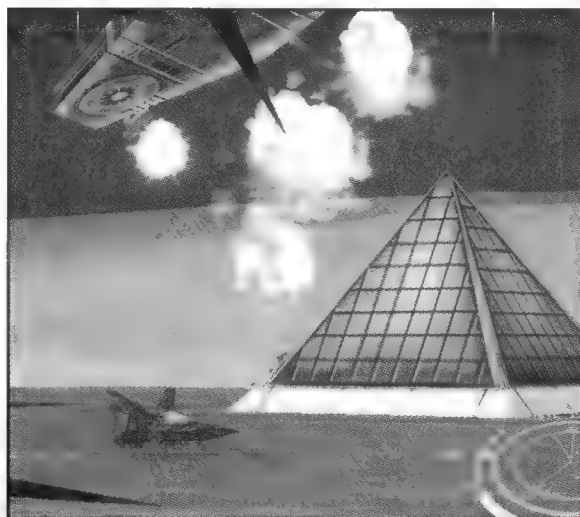


Fig. 17-7.

If the Metagens get to the landing site before you, don't worry. You still have 40 seconds to crisp the ship.

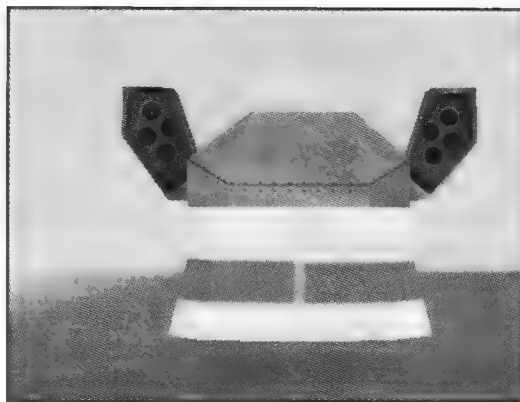
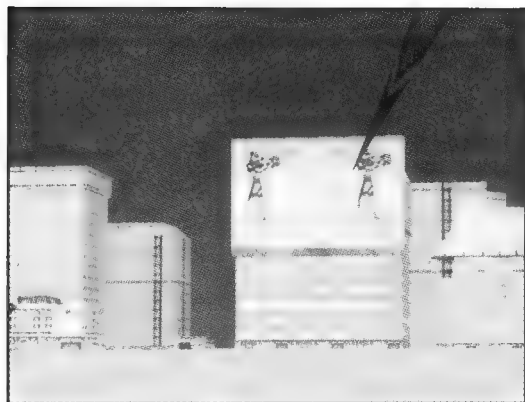


Fig. 17-8. The re-supplied city is a tough nut to crack. Both MFAC and missile turrets ring the perimeter.

There is no great tactical trick to the city assault. This is just brutal combat. Try to thin out the turret ranks as you approach. Knock them out with mighty PBW blasts. (Just two hits per turret, with weapons linked, should do the trick.) Targets abound, so keep your squad busy hitting whatever pops into your target indicator. Remember: This is a street fight, so use buildings for cover and watch your six.

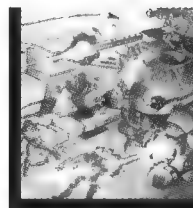
MISSION: ISOLATE//INOCULATE//ANNIHILATE

PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: CORE ASSAULT ZONE

This mission is just a full frontal assault. General consensus at Dynamix rates this as the "Mother of All Cybrid Missions." Waves of your guys slam into waves of their guys. Bombers roar overhead. Gun turrets mow down assault teams. Dropships slip in with reinforcements. What a rage! If you keep your head and make a couple of crucial moves, you can tilt the odds in your favor.

A defensive outpost holds the high ground in front of Nova-Alexandria. You must destroy it to pave the way for your Cybrid brethren into the sanctum of Epimetheus\Human-Leader: Prime. Therefore, you face a classic military challenge: *Take the hill.*



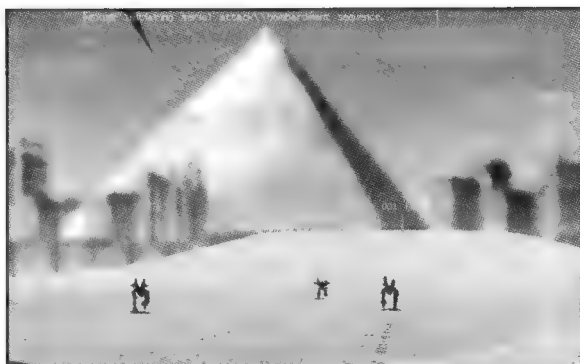


Fig. 17-9.

Only that heavily defended hill stands between you and Nova-Alexandria now.

Enemies

- ★ 2 Disrupter
- ★ 1 Knight's Disrupter
- ★ 1 Conveyor (carries 3 Emanicipator)
- ★ 2 Knight's Minotaur
- ★ 1 Basilisk
- ★ 1 Outrider Dreadlock
- ★ 4 Knight's Apocalypse
- ★ 1 Knight's Gorgon
- ★ 1 Avenger
- ★ 1 Olympian
- ★ 1 Nike
- ★ 4 Turret\Construct
- ★ 1 Terran Ammo Cargo
- ★ 1 Terran Big Ammo Cargo
- ★ Various base constructs, containers

Recommended Rig Setup

Aside from replacing lost equipment, keep your squad outfitted the same as last mission. Again, firepower is more important than maneuverability at this point in the game.

Mission Walkthrough

Shortly after you drop into the mission, three Disrupters suddenly uncloak, one at a time, and hit you from behind. Disrupters are fast, and they're equipped with Electrohulls for ramming power. These three also carry ELF's instead of the usual Disrupter weapon, so don't let them score too many close-range hits. Concentrate squad fire to dispose of each one quickly; you don't want to end up traversing a web of jagged ELF bolts.

Proceed toward Nav 001, which marks the hilltop base about 4500 meters away. As you approach, the first Cybrid wave, two Adjudicators and a Shepherd about 1000 meters ahead of you, begins its advance on the base. (You can see their positions on the Satellite Map.) Follow in behind and hope like hell they soften up the base defenses a little bit.

When you get within 2500 meters of Nav 001, the base artillery opens up. It looks scary, but chances are good nothing will hit you if you keep moving. When you get within 800 meters of the base, or if enemy ground units move within 800 meters of you, the barrage stops. Your first goal: Reach the lip of the hill intact.

About this time, your Consul Bombers fly overhead to hit the base. It looks cool, but don't count on the Cybrid air corps to inflict any significant damage.

Now comes a key moment. Just after the bombers fly over, veer right and look up. A big flying Conveyor floats down the right flank. If it passes you unmolested, it lands behind your squad. It then unloads three Emancipators to attack you from the rear at a most inopportune moment. So swat the flying irritant from the sky.

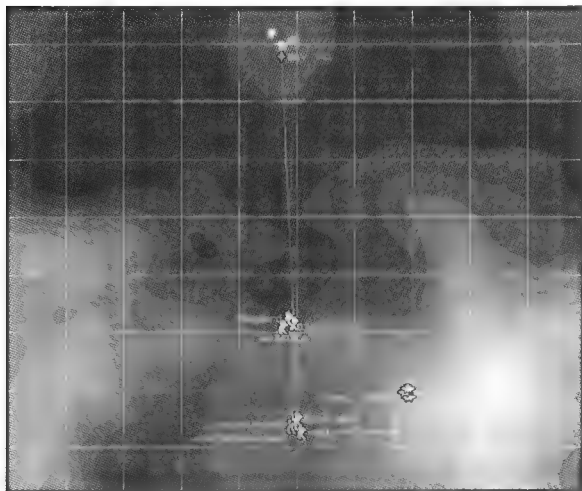


Fig. 17-10.

A quick glance at the Satellite Map reveals the tactical situation. The first Cybrid wave advances on Nav 001 ahead of you. And a wing of Cybrid bombers readies its own attack run on the base.

Now focus on the hilltop guns. Try to pick off a few turrets as you approach the hill before the first enemy ground patrol hits. Two are deadly MFAC turrets, and two fire Heavy Autocannons. The low spot at the base of the hill cuts off the turrets' firing line, but to reach that dead spot, you have to hack through the first wave of base defenders. Fortunately, this wave—one Basilisk, one Knight's Minotaur, and one Outrider Dreadlock—is easily dispatched by your crack troops.

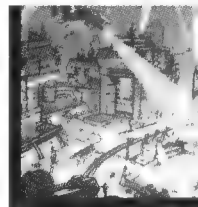
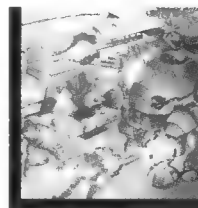




Fig. 17-11.

This Conveyor ship tries to sneak three Emancipators up your right flank. Shoot it down now to avoid an unpleasant attack from the rear later.

NOTE

If you didn't shoot down the flying Conveyor earlier, the three Emancipators it disgorged will hit your position from behind. This will happen at about the same time that you tangle with this second wave of base defenders. *Surprise!*

After the first wave is defeated, a Knight's Apocalypse and a huge Olympian attack from the base. Concentrate fire. After you defeat them, pause under the lip of the hill.

While you fought this second wave, a Knight's Dropship slipped into the base above. It deposited a Knight's Gorgon, a Knight's Minotaur, and a Knight's Myrmidon. This unit guards the perimeter of the base; its attack will be triggered by your approach. So keep your

squadmates joined on you while you regroup under the hill. Then let your shields and energy recharge and take it easy for a moment.

Why stop now? Well, believe it or not, your Nexus has actually dispatched reinforcements. Three Shepherds soon arrive with orders to defend you. Note that you can't give orders to them. These guys have a will of their own.

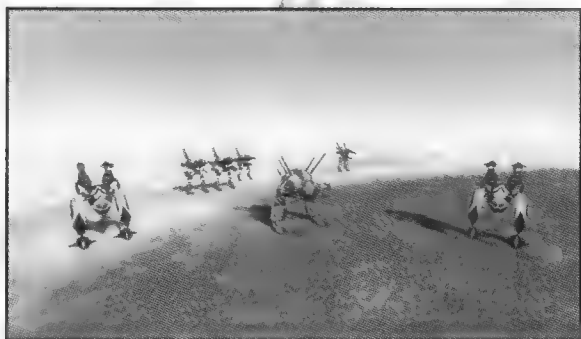


Fig. 17-12.

Reinforcements! With three Shepherds in the fold, you now lead a veritable battalion of battle Heres.

OK, now take the hill. This is a fun melee. If your squad is still intact, you go over the top with seven Cybrids in your attack wave. Kill the defenders, burn any remaining turrets, and then destroy all structures in the base.

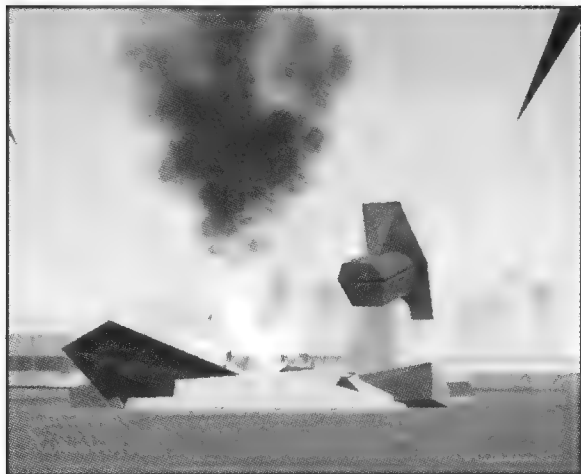


Fig. 17-13.

After you eliminate the last defenders, tear the base to shreds to complete the mission objectives.

During (or sometimes before) this merciless rampage, another Knight's Dropship delivers three final base defenders. This is a unit of Knight's Apocalypses loaded with heat-seeking missiles. (You turned on your Thermal Diffuser long ago, didn't you?) This last, desperate wave hits from the north. Once you defeat them, mop up the rest of the base buildings to successfully complete the mission.

MISSION: HURT//MAIM//KILL

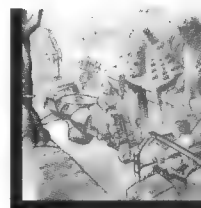
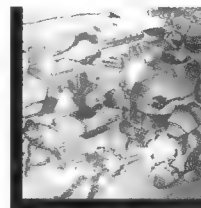
PLANET: EARTH

LOCATION: CORE ASSAULT ZONE

NOTE

Tanks don't have shields in *Starsiege*. But, sorry to report, Harabec's Predator does. It also sports Twin MFACs, Quicksilver regenerative armor, and a Nano-Repair Module. So he hits hard, never misses, and is hard to kill.

"Murder//kill//burst <Harabec Weathers>." Those are your orders. As the mission briefing points out, Mister Predator wants *you*, pal—one-on-one. But unlike the final duel with Prometheus in the Human campaigns, here you can choose to bring your loyal (and amusing) squadmates. However, if you do so, Harabec brings help too.





In fact, Harabec always gets exactly one more squadmate than you do. If you bring one, he gets two. If you bring two, he gets three. And he gets all Knight vehicles with elite pilots and the best weapons available.

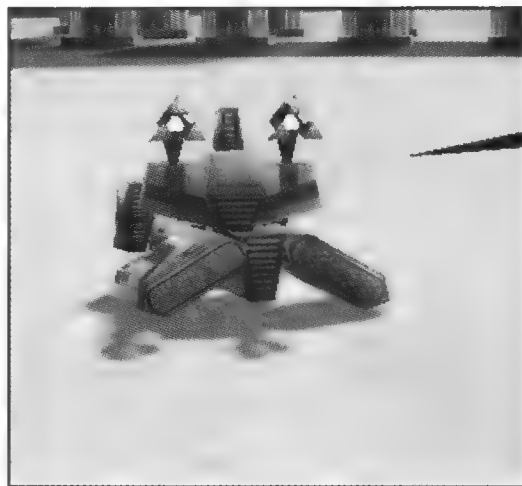
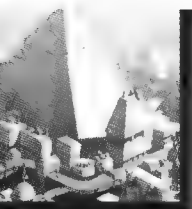
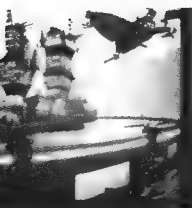
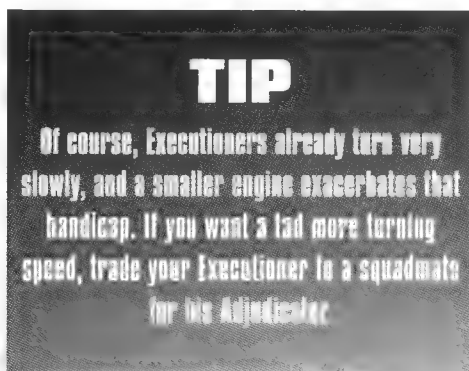


Fig. 17-14. Harabec issues his challenge to you. Can you handle his swift Predator alone?

Enemies

- ★ Harabec's Predator
- ★ Possible: 1 Knight's Gorgon
- ★ Possible: 1 Knight's Basilisk
- ★ Possible: 1 Knight's Myrmidon

Recommended Rig Setup



Harabec's Predator is very quick, and he swivels his turret with pure mastery. Counter his ace piloting and gunnery with raw, unadulterated power. Your Executioner with four Particle Beam Weapons is slow. Deal Harabec enough direct hits of quad-PBW fire, and it's time to process >>RAPTURE<<.

Other outfitting tips: Take the Theta shield generator and the Crystaluminum armor. Dump jammers and downgrade your engine as far as you must to make up any tonnage deficit. You face no missiles, and you need no speed for

this mission. You can take the lightweight Eta sensor too because this mission's combat takes place in a very limited space.

The same holds true for your squadmates, if you decide to bring any. Dump all jammers and replace them with shield amplifiers or Batteries. Beef up armor, shield generators, and weapons if possible. Again, downgrade engines as far as you need to make up the tonnage deficit.

Mission Walkthrough



Fig. 17-15. Hurt. Maim. Kill.

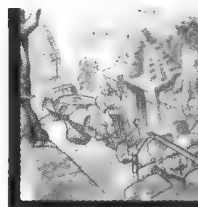
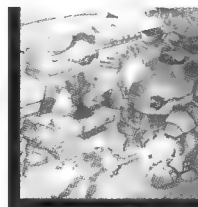
The Dynamix testing and design teams, being inveterate gamers, recommend that you fight Harabec alone, one-on-one. And why not? This is the ultimate test of skill.

But to be completely honest, you'll have much better success attacking with a full squad. Sure, it's less dramatic and violates the spirit of the grand finale. After all, Harabec challenges you, <Killer-of-Animals: First>, the destroyer of his "womb-brother\littermate." But if you've kept your squadmates alive from the very beginning of the Cybrid campaigns, they are now very, very good.

Even outnumbered, ace Cybrid squadmates will handle Harabec's Knights with good success. And in the melee, they'll draw Harabec's MFAC fire away from you. That way, you can hammer him with some uncontested Particle Beam hits. Anyway, why break up a winning team? In the immortal words of some football coach or another, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

There are only two strategy tips for you if you choose to face Harabec alone.

First: Stop about 800 meters from Harabec and knock out the pillars holding up the roof over his head. The structure collapses, falls on him, and does damage. (Not much, but some.)



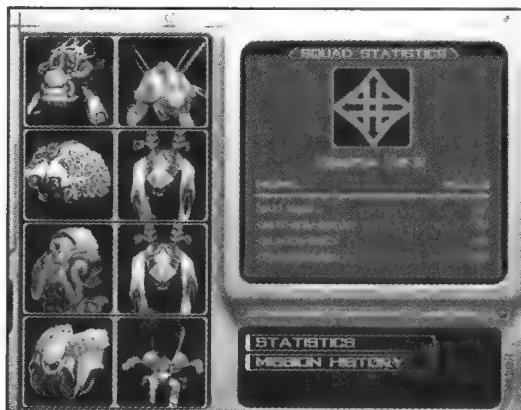
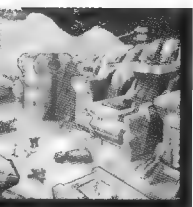
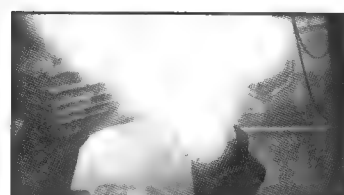
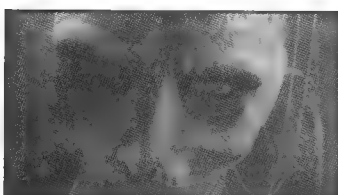
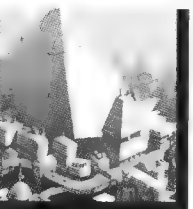
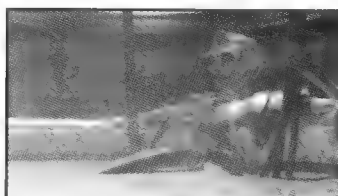
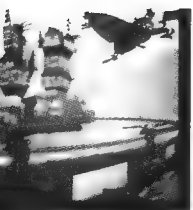


Fig. 17-16. If your squad has kill numbers like these, they'll fare quite well in the final melee against Harabec's best animals.

Second: When he comes at you, don't miss—ever.



WEAPON STATISTICS

Appendix

The table in this appendix, courtesy of *Starsiege* designer Dave Selle, lists the unmodified effects of weapons on armor. He notes, however, that the true calculation of the damage a weapon inflicts goes like this:

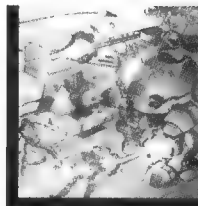
$$[(\text{SPECIFIC WEAPON DAMAGE TYPE} \times \text{GENERAL ARMOR EFFECTIVENESS}) - (\text{ARMOR "SHRUG" FOR SPECIFIC DAMAGE TYPE})] \times (\text{ARMOR EFFECTIVENESS FOR SPECIFIC DAMAGE TYPE}) = \text{POINT OF IMPACT DAMAGE}$$

This calculation is made for each type of damage inflicted by each particular weapon. Armor gets to “shrug” (reduce damage points) for each of the four damage types. Thus, an armor type may have up to four shrugs per weapon.

The three main types of damage a weapon can inflict are electric/plasma, thermal, and concussion. The fourth is “special” damage such as nano-weapon, disrupter, or radiation damage. A weapon projectile inflicts between 0-100 percent of each specific damage type. The total damage inflicted by the projectile is always 100 percent. For example, a weapon can be 80 percent electric/plasma and 20 percent thermal.

Theoretically, a weapon can inflict all four damage types, making the entire damage calculation somewhat complicated. In practice, however, most weapons inflict only one or two types of damage. Some of the larger guns (like the MFAC) inflict all three of the main damage types. Radiation Guns, Blink Guns, and nano-weapons inflict special damage.

If you really want to complicate matters, you can factor in the blast damage effect, which depends on target motion and where the projectile hits. The main thing to know about blast damage: Weapons that inflict it are more effective in practice than the bare numbers would indicate. Missiles, proximity charges, Arachnitron mines, and Blast Cannons have the biggest blast radius. MFACs, EMPs, and Rail Guns feature a smaller blast radius.





Weapon	Carlam	QBM	DURAC	Ceramic	Crystaluminum	Quicksilver	Notes
Laser	91	64	64	14	127	64	—
Heavy Laser	207	145	145	95	243	145	—
Comp Laser	188	131	131	0	295	131	Represents all 3 beams hitting
Twin Laser	136	95	95	0	207	95	Represents both beams hitting
Emp	38	13	13	6	0	13	—
ELF	675	650	650	325	545	650	—
Blaster	335	310	310	155	236	310	—
Heavy Blaster	457	432	432	216	347	432	—
PBW	559	440	440	280	505	440	—
Plasma	372	300	300	155	320	300	—
Blink Gun	119	94	94	47	40	94	Does internal Damage
Qgun	775	750	750	375	636	750	—
MFAC	839	875	771	719	841	850	—
Nano Infuser	0	0	0	0	0	0	Does internal Damage only
Nanite Cannon	0	0	0	0	0	0	Does internal Damage only
Autocannon	83	125	63	167	91	100	—
Hvy Autocannon	133	200	125	250	159	175	—
EMC Autocannon	100	150	83	194	114	125	—
Blast Cannon	153	175	108	205	168	150	—
Hvy Blast Can	241	275	198	282	251	250	—
Rail Gun	221	313	219	375	261	288	—
Pit Viper	255	325	238	333	334	300	—
Sparrow	255	325	238	333	334	300	—
SWARM	298	375	281	388	386	350	—
Minion	298	375	281	388	386	350	—
Shrike	383	475	369	496	490	450	—
Aphid	298	375	281	388	386	350	—
Arachnitron	383	475	369	496	490	450	—
HHG Proximity Charge	298	375	281	388	386	350	—
Radiation Gun	0	0	0	0	11	0	Does internal and pilot damage
SMART Gun	102	145	79	189	109	120	—

General Notes

This table reflects the actual damage inflicted by one projectile at the point of impact against undamaged armor. It does not take into account blast damage effects or armor deterioration.

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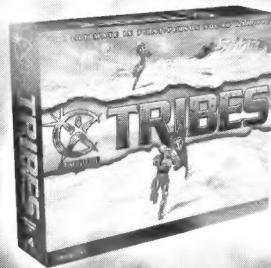
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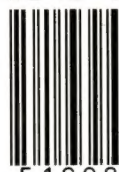
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